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Comparability with what?

The justification for the big pay increases proposed for public servants by the Boyle committee is that these people's salaries compare very badly with similar jobs in the private sector. But what the Boyle report does not say – though its own statistics show it – is that the comparison is being made with the wages of a group of people who have, over the last four years, succeeded in busting the government's own pay policy. Calculations show that thousands of senior executives have been getting pay increases much greater than those they could reasonably expect on a strict adherence to pay policy.

Furthermore there is plenty of evidence that the higher paid have been able to top up their salaries with fringe benefits. Boyle shows that these added an extra 28 per cent to the pay of board members in the private sector during 1977 (compared with 25 per cent in 1973) and an extra 24 per cent for senior executives. The two most important fringe benefits are pensions and cars. Almost 90 per cent of company executives and board members have company cars (the tax on this benefit, incidentally, is well below the real cost of running a car). For senior executives this perk has increased in popularity over the last four years – the number of senior executives in private industry *without* cars has halved in that time. In the nationalised industries, comparability has been eagerly pursued: the use of company cars has spread like an epidemic, and the proportion of beneficiaries has doubled to nearly 60 per cent.

The figures which Boyle produces on the value of pension fund contributions are particularly interesting. In recent years the press and others have frequently criticised the public services inflation-proofed pensions. These benefits are still far ahead of most promised in the private sector. But Boyle's figures suggest that companies are looking after their senior executives very well. The average board member gets his company to make a contribution to his pension fund of over 20 per cent of salary.

This is nothing like the sort of contribution employers are willing to make for the average shop floor worker. And main board members own contributions to their pension scheme average about 3 per cent – well under the average contribution of most employees.

To find out what was going on in the private sector the Boyle report undertook a survey of top salaries and fringe benefits. In addition to board members, the survey covered just over 1,500 senior executives. In 1974 their average salary was £9,400 each. Under the social contract a 1974/5 rise of a quarter (£2,350) would have been generous. In the next pay round very few senior executives should have received any pay increase because of the cut-off point at £8,500. And in 1976/7 they were limited to £4 a week, or £208 a year. On this interpretation of the pay rules, 1974's £9,400 should have become £12,000 by September 1977. But Boyle's statistics show that it was actually £13,000.

The significance of much of this information may well never have occurred to most members of the Boyle committee. It is hard to imagine a collection of people more likely to support wage increases for the higher paid. Lord Boyle, himself a Tory career politician, is a member of the Athenaeum, Carlton, Pratts and Beefsteak clubs, where, it is fair to assume, discussions about egalitarianism are less frequently the talk of the smoking room than the problems of the rich. His colleagues include Sir Harold Atcherley and Sir John Clark (senior private sector businessmen) and Sir George Coldstream and Lord Plowden – both with a lifetime of service in government departments. It would be interesting, perhaps, to have a couple of manual workers on the review body for the next round.

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Notes on Politics and Power

Celebrating thirty years of the NHS

David Widgery writes: On Tuesday 27 June, a duplicated circular arrived at the surgeries of East London GPs baldly announcing the closure – at five days notice – of Bethnal Green Hospital's Casualty and acute surgical and orthopaedic facilities. At a stroke this ended a 24 hour emergency service which treats some 13,000 new patients a year and has served the local people for nearly a century. It also closed Mike Pilcher's hip replacement unit which has a current waiting list of 192 patients crippled with arthritis, ended two other surgeons' lists

and made Dr 'Kutty' Divakaran, Casualty Officer for 13 years, redundant. The Green's patients would presumably simply join the tail end of the waiting lists and queues at the London Hospital, already far too long.

The closures would have succeeded in plummeting the District's total 'acute' beds from over 1,000 to 665, a recipe for a medical crisis by next Autumn. The shell of The Green has been designated for low-cost conversion to an all-geriatric hospital, labelled temporary but likely to become permanent – a workhouse for the Eighties. And this 'change of use' would turn the key on a larger sequence of events from Shoreditch through to Stepney which would see the effective end of other East London medical landmarks.

Well the axe fell, but on rather more resilient material than the administrators had expected. The staff at Bethnal Green held an immediate emergency meeting and decided on the spot, to strike for two hours in protest. Three days later, staff in eight East London hospitals stopped work in sympathy and marched in well ordered fury to the offices of Mr David Pashley, the young Acting Administrator who issued the closure notice. The Tower Hamlets Community Health Council, who had given provisional approval to the change of use at Bethnal Green voted for the Secretary of State to intervene and for renewed consultation. Tower Hamlet's Borough Chief Executive Jack Wolkind told the hapless Pashley that he should 'countermand any decision which may have been given for the closure of the Unit'. And under Ian Mikardo's prodding, the Secretary of State issued a Commons statement that, yes, the Casualty Department would be kept open. Alas, administrators are never wrong in the NHS, especially the Tower Hamlets District Management Team, who showed no serious intention of withdrawing their edict. So staff at the Green approved a six point workers charter, moved by Henrietta Cox, NUPE laundry steward, declaring no confidence in management and electing a workers committee. At 8.01 pm on Saturday 1st July a sign reading 'CASUALTY OPEN under *staff* control' was nailed outside the hospital and at 8.06 the first 999 ambulance call arrived at Britain's first Casualty work-in. Within hours, direct approaches by the staff to Emergency Beds Service, the Ambulance Service and GPs established that medical cover was adequate and safe. It was, said Dr John Thompson, 'Business as Usual'. 'If it's this easy, maybe we should try a revolution next' said one of the kitchen workers.

The future of this 30th anniversary NHS work-in is uncertain. But an unlikely but highly effective alliance ranging from BMA doctors to SWP porters have already won an important victory. They have defied their administrators to keep treating the sick. Nye would have approved heartily.

Immigrant organisations unite on Moss Side

Mike Phillips writes: One of the posters going up around Moss Side this week shows the clean cut and smiling photograph of the NF candidate. Opposite it, is another photograph of the same man about to punch a policeman. The caption reads, 'Keep hooligans out of Moss Side'. The poster is the work of the Manchester Black Peoples' Alliance, a group recently formed in Moss Side, partly to oppose the Front candidacy, partly as a response to the feeling that the other candidates in next week's by-election were ignoring the attitudes and opinions of the black and immigrant people in the constituency.

The main parties' line on race, led by Liberal candidate Peter Thomson and Labour's George Morton, can be articulated in Morton's words, 'Black and white live together and there is no racial problem'. In fact black political activity centred around racial issues has always been a prominent element in Moss Side community organisation; and it has speeded up and intensified during the last two or three weeks. A token of this intensification is the formation of the Alliance, which consists of more than a dozen local West Indian and Asian organisations. At their inaugural meeting last week they rejected the view that there was no racial problem in the area, and called on the Corporation to ban the NF permanently from using any premises under their control. The strength of local immigrant feeling can be gauged from the fact that this is probably the first attempt by British West Indians and Asians, at a local level, to form a single political organisation with long term aims.

The Alliance's inaugural statement was only the first step in a campaign which includes circulating leaflets and holding a series of public meetings which will examine the merits and demerits of each party, and make comments on where they stand on racial issues. Labour is likely to suffer least from their analysis. The Conservatives will take a predictable hammering. The Liberal candidate, who claims extensive support from a base of community work, already faces intense criticism from some of his former colleagues at the now defunct Hulme Peoples' Rights Centre. They accuse him publicly of being a carpetbagger, who forced them into a losing confrontation with the City Council for his own political ends. From the point of view of the Alliance, Labour will probably benefit most from its activities. As one of their leaders said. 'If we stir black people up enough to come out, they won't vote Conservative or Liberal. Labour will get the benefits this time. But once we've used the machine and we can see how it works, we might just take him down again.'

Light on Lucas

Christopher Hird writes: The Lucas Aerospace Combine Committee's corporate plan is one of the most exciting things which has happened in recent years. The response to it by the trade unions, the government and the company's management is one of the most depressing. Breakfast time TV viewers will find it worth tuning in at 9.20 a.m. this Saturday to watch a programme about the Lucas plan on BBC-2's Open University *Control of Technology* series.

The Combine Committee produced their plan in 1976 after 18 months of work. They reckoned (rightly) that the outlook for the aerospace industry was only moderate and wanted the considerable skills within the company to be used making other products. Shop stewards had quite a struggle persuading shop-floor workers that it was worth defending their jobs in this way.

The plan was lengthy and well researched – many of the engineers and technicians who designed Lucas' conventional products helped with it. At first the government was keen – the then Industry Minister, Tony Benn, encouraged the combine committee to produce the plan. The venture showed that workers were not just interested in more money and mindlessly defending their jobs in the face of falling demand. Lucas management rejected the plan and said they were only willing to set up local consultative committees to talk about new products. Their idea of how the company should develop was quite different from that of the workers'. The Lucas management, along with the TUC and the present industry minister refused to take part in the BBC's programme.

This gives Mike Cooley, one of the driving forces behind the plan, plenty of chance to say why he thinks the response has been so unenthusiastic. The workers have challenged the management's power; the rank and file have challenged the union bureaucrats' power; the government is not going to champion such a cause. Recently the government lent Lucas £8 million to help keep their Liverpool factory open but did not attempt to tie this to any sort of acceptance of the Corporate Plan.

The Lucas workers are not going to sit

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around for long. Lucas have agreed to meet the government and the workers to discuss their rationalisation plans for the aerospace division, so the Corporate Plan will be on the table again. Though in the meantime, Lucas have threatened Cooley with the sack if he takes too much time off to work on the Corporate Plan.

Time to rumble the grant givers

Anna Coote writes: A challenge to the fraternity of grant-giving foundations to make itself socially accountable will be made this weekend by one of its most distinguished members, the Barrow and Geraldine S. Cadbury Trust. The latest report of this trust (which is the largest of many set up by the Cadbury family) breaks with convention to publish detailed accounts not only of the grants it has dispensed, but also of the reasons why it made those grants. The trustees have come round to the view that all grant-giving trusts have a duty to reveal much more information than previously.

Between them, the trusts give away more than £170m. a year to charities of their own choosing. They therefore wield considerable power (in a gentlemanly fashion) among the organisations who spend their money on education, welfare, social and scientific research, protection of animals, aid to distressed gentlefolk and so forth. Rather more than a third of the money they give away is theirs by courtesy of the government and the taxpayer, in the form of exemptions from income tax, corporation tax, capital gains tax, capital transfer tax, development land tax, certain VAT waivers and discretionary rate relief.

The trusts have certainly not been falling over themselves to let the public know what they are doing. A recent survey by the Charities Foundation showed that less than 40 per cent published financial accounts; 23 per cent provided records of the grants they had made; and only 19 per cent revealed even the bare bones of their trustees' policy. Those which dispense more than £1m. a year tend to publish regular reports, but they don't give much away about the background to their decisions. Little is known about the Foundations Forum (formerly the 'Donors Dozen'), an exclusive club of the top executives of the 30 largest grant-giving trusts which meets biannually.

Some foundations apparently forget that their freedom to distribute *largesse* has been conferred on them by Parliament and is maintained only by public consent. As one trust secretary put it: 'They behave as though they're doing people a favour by giving away their money. But they don't have any option. They've *got* to give the bloody stuff away!'

Building up the workers' blacklist

Duncan Campbell writes: Last week we were reminded again that personal freedom has nothing to do with 'free enterprise', by news from workers in a major undertakers' organisation that the Economic League is still bent on sabotaging the industrial careers of anyone whose political views are tainted by socialism.

Under the guidance of a Director of Research and Information, Mr Jack Winder, the League is organised in six regions, with offices and representatives in the larger industrial areas. In the North Eastern region, auxiliary offices have been set up in Leeds, Newcastle, Sheffield and Hull. In 1974 the Scottish region established a new office in Aberdeen. This was apparently a direct response to increasing unionisation of oil workers, organised by the Inter-Union Offshore Committee and bitterly fought by most of the American 'redneck' employers. The League's new representative in Aberdeen readily agreed with a reporter that his job would be to help root out union activists in local companies.

Each area office has an unlisted telephone number. Companies which pay for the blacklist service must quote a verification or account number before being supplied with filed details on a prospective employee. The League subscribes, as discreetly as possible, to every left-wing and industrial paper. The index of names it has built up from that source is supplemented by details from employers.

The League is financially supported by most of the 'free enterprise' stalwarts, in a long list headed by Shell, including all the banks, Tate and Lyle and Vic Matthews' Trafalgar House Investments. Mr Matthews is also a member of the League's Central Council. To this must be added the wide range of large and small companies who pay for the League's blacklist and other information services. In 1975, these were found to include the publicly owned British Steel Corporation, whose subsidiary, Reinforcement Steel Services at Greenwich, was in the habit of checking all employees' names with the League. Unlike many countries, Britain has no privacy legislation to control information gathering (except where credit agencies are concerned). A lawsuit is possible if information is stored or used maliciously – but prospective employees have little chance of finding out what others are finding out about their private lives.

Free Speech:

Down with Select Committees

One of the most unfortunate consequences of the furore over the report of the House of Commons select committee on the steel industry and the later report on race relations and immigration has been the apparent elevation of the importance and effectiveness of select committees. The media and some misguided MPs have talked about a resurgence of backbench power vis-à-vis the executive and have mislead themselves into exaggerating the influence and usefulness of such committees out of all proportion to that which they actually possess or should enjoy.

Politics is about conflict, the clash of ideologies, principles, values and ideas. The activity of politics is a recognition that we are divided, that there is no real and sustained consensus and that in the end divisions and interests and opinion can only be resolved by one party trampling over the other in the division lobby. The cosy world of a select committee searching for a spurious consensus is as dangerous as it is stupid. Committees smother conflict and debate whereas the real objective should be to bring them into the open.

To suggest that select committees represent a challenge to the executive is hilarious. Months usually elapse before Governments even deign to give a considered reply to their reports and the committee is extremely lucky if its report is ever properly debated. And if it ever is, it is usually merely to take note, not to implement the reports recommendations.

But in any case, how can the reports of committees be taken seriously when the attendance of MPs is variable, when the interrogation of Eric Varley by the select committee that made such a fuss about not getting enough information about the steel industry had to be postponed because not enough members considered it important enough to turn up to make a quorum? When they do turn up, few MPs on select committees are adequatey briefed, most are selected by the whips, and are removed, as was Oonagh McDonald and Caerwyn Roderick, the moment their membership looks like being embarassing to the Government. Little wonder there is no example of a committee mounting an effective challenge to any government. All such challenges to the executive emanated from the chambers Churchill's opposition to appeasement was alone, in the chamber, not in the unread pages of a report from a Select Committee. And if we skip the years to the present parliament the defeats of the Government on war widows' tax, on VAT, on Rooker-Wise, on Judges Rules, on the Bail Bill and on the 40 per cent requirement for the referendum on devolution for Scotland, were all mounted successfully in the chamber.

Compared to the power that can be wielded in the chamber select committees are a feeble instrument. But that, of course, is what makes them so useful to the Government, and their extension so dangerous to those of us who decry the growth of the corporate state and who want to see Parliament effective. One sure way of keeping an MP out of mischief is to send him to help staff a select committee. He will feel important, grateful, will burrow away at becoming an expert – on one subject this month and another the next – forgetting all the time that this is not his proper function. Experts can be hired, they are in abundance, and have greater expertise than any MP will gain in twice weekly interrogations.

If an MP needs 'facts' then he should harvest them himself but he should remember that it is no part of his role to become a walking encyclopaedia. His function is to act as a bridge between his constituents and the government, to question Ministers, criticise policy and hound incompetence, and he should perform these functions in the chamber where it counts.

Select committee members are right to stress that it is only with full information that Government can be properly surveilled and the executive held accountable. Agreed. But the solution to that problem is not a proliferation of committees nor even an increase in the power of those already in existence. What is needed is more open government. That could be given a major push by the passing of a Freedom of Information Act and a reform of the Official Secrets Act. Then all of us could know the facts and make our own judgments.

Robert Kilroy-Silk MP

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Sanctions busting: the cover-up

Martin Bailey and **Bernard Rivers** show how government statements about sanctions – often based on advice from the oil companies – were seriously misleading.

The failure of oil sanctions has been a chronicle of disaster. Last week we showed how the oil companies sabotaged sanctions by supplying the rebel regime through the use of intermediaries. This week we show how the British government was unprepared to impose oil sanctions, whatever they said in public; how government officials knew that sanctions were being broken, but the government in London did nothing, and how the oil companies account of what was going on fell far short of what they knew. As a result the British parliament and the United Nations got a quite false impression of the extent of sanctions busting.

Britain introduced the oil embargo against Rhodesia on 17 December 1965 – five weeks after the declaration of UDI. On 11 January next year Prime Minister Harold Wilson forecast that rebel Rhodesian premier Mr Ian Smith could be toppled 'within weeks rather than months' basing his prediction, as he later admitted, on advice that 'the oil sanctions and the closure of the Beira pipeline would bring the Rhodesian economy to a halt'. It is now clear that the British government had not done enough planning to justify this statement and that after the blockade oil had no difficulty in getting in to Rhodesia under the eyes of the British diplomats.

Wilson's words often exaggerated what was being done. On 29 October 1965 he threatened Smith with the oil embargo and told him 'disastrous consequences' would follow UDI. This suggests some planning had been undertaken, but twelve days *after* UDI Wilson admitted in the Commons that 'there were many technical and economic factors to be examined' if oil sanctions were to be imposed. Indeed, just two days before sanctions were imposed the British government allowed a BP tanker – *British Security* – to deliver 12,000 tons of crude oil for Rhodesia at the port of Beira. Professor Dudley Seers – a civil servant at the time – has described the staff work on sanctions as 'unbelievably bad'.

Sanctions were a disaster mainly because the British government overlooked South Africa. Robert Good, former US ambassador in Lusaka, has told us 'right from the start the American government was aware that oil would flow through South Africa and Mozambique – and Washington warned London of this before sanctions were ever imposed'.

The British paid the price for ignoring this. Early in February 1966 it was reported that road tankers were crossing the South African-Rhodesian border at Beitbridge. Soon newspaper photographs showed, on the side of one of the road tankers, faintly visible through a thin coat of grey paint, a large 'P' – part of the BP insignia. Shell tankers were also spotted on this route. Just one week later it was reported that Shell, Caltex, and Mobil were building a new 100,000 gallon depot at Nessina, ten miles South of the Beitbridge border.

Robert Good has revealed that after the first reports came through of this road traffic, the officers of the British Embassy in Pretoria were 'incredulous' and they discounted these stories in their dispatches to London. Embassy officials subsequently mounted a round-the-clock surveillance at Beitbridge from a parked car a few yards from the border gate. An HMG spokesman told journalists that reports of a substantial flow of oil were 'clearly very highly coloured'. This missed the point: once South Africa had decided to allow some oil to go through to Rhodesia, there was little reason why the flow could not be increased. And early in March the Rhodesians were so confident that they announced a relaxation of petrol rationing.

In April the British tried to step up their campaign. After the 'Joanna V' tanker steamed into the Mozambique port of Beira carrying 18,000 tons of crude oil for Rhodesia, the British Government asked the UN Security Council for permission to blockade the offending harbour.

> 'Former employees of Shell-Mozambique recalled that when they played golf with the British consul the question of oil supplies was diplomatically avoided . . .'

But we can reveal that even *after* the blockade, significant quantities of refined products were landed at Beira – under the very eyes of the Royal Navy – and subsequently sent by rail to Umtali in Rhodesia. Former employees of Shell-Mozambique have confirmed that the company continued to rail specialised products from Beira into Rhodesia during the 1960s.

It is difficult to believe that the British Consul in the port was unaware of this traffic. Former employees of Shell-Mozambique have recalled that when they played golf with him the question of oil supplies to Rhodesia was diplomatically avoided. Ironically the Consul's office was in a building which was the Beira branch of one of the major forwarding companies involved in sanctions-busting (though not of oil): he often had to ask permission to use their xerox machine.

The involvement of the oil companies in helping to break sanctions is confirmed in a book which is to be published in English later this month: *Sanctions Double Cross*, by Jarge Jardim, who helped coordinate the supply of oil to Rhodesia. He claims that in December 1966 the South African subsidiaries of Shell and BP joined Total, Mobil, and Caltex in sending oil products by tanker to Lourenço Marques, and then on by rail into Rhodesia.

This scheme involved the active participation of Shell-Mozambique, which was registered in Britain. In December 1967 – one year after the Lourenço Marques route had been first used by Shell and BP – it appears that the head offices of the companies assured the British Government that only negligible quantities of oil found their way to Rhodesia from Shell-Mozambique. This was far from the case: the company had that year handled some 40 per cent of Rhodesia's needs. A confidential memorandum shows that William Fraser and Frank McFadzean, Managing Directors of BP and Shell respectively, agreed at a meeting on 28 December 1967 that Shell and BP 'would be in a very difficult position' if George Thomson, Commonwealth Secretary, were to repeat these assurances to the Commons and then 'the Portuguese authorities were able to come out with clear evidence to the contrary.'

The following month Shell wrote a letter to Louis Walker, head of Shell-South Africa, pointing out that 'for Shell-Mozambique to deliver products, while having reasonable cause to believe that the customer will subsequently supply them to a person in Rhodesia, is clearly an offence' under sanctions legislation. Walker cabled in reply: 'I can assure you we have not despatched any products at any time in contravention of the relevant Orders'.

William Fraser, head of BP, was informed on 15 February 1968 by a senior BP executive that 'Walker's cable . . . was not correct in the light of the facts as we know them . . . Shell-Mozambique had reasonable cause to believe that . . . supplies . . . were going to Rhodesia.' So, more than ten years ago the parent companies were aware that their subsidiaries were supplying Rhodesia in contravention of UK legislation.

The following day Fraser and McFadzean met, with other senior Shell and BP officials, and it was explained that a new scheme had just been introduced. The Total oil company had taken over part of Shell's Mozambican activities in supplying Rhodesia, and was compensated for this in South Africa. (This agreement ended in 1972.) Fraser recorded that Shell and BP

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From left to right: Sir Frank McFadzean, ex-managing director of Shell; the late William Fraser (Lord Strathalmond), boss of BP; George (now Baron) Thomson, Commonwealth Secretary; Sir Harold Wilson; Lord Greenhill, the government's man on the BP board since 1973 and Ian Smith.

officials had earlier had a meeting with the Government at which 'no mention had been made of this exchange, and therefore if it did become known, their position could also be very awkward.' Furthermore, 'if it ever came into the open that BP had condoned such a thing without informing the Government, it was perfectly obvious that the Government would in one way or another be forced to take control of BP.'

A few days later, on 21 February 1969, Fraser and McFadzean met George Thomson, Commonwealth Secretary. They claimed that they had done what they could to stop Shell-Mozambique supplying oil for Rhodesia in accordance with Thomson's earlier request. But, they said it was still possible that complicated swap arrangements would be made so that other oil companies supplied Rhodesia (via intermediaries) on behalf of Shell and BP in South Africa. Apparently they did *not* tell him that they knew that such swap arrangements had already been made, and that Shell-Mozambique – a company registered in the UK – had already been supplying oil for Rhodesia.

The House debated sanctions just five weeks later, on 27 March 1968. Thomson said nothing of what he had learned from the oil companies. Instead he claimed: 'No other country does more in the field of sanctions than the United Kingdom. I do not claim any special virtue for this. It is Britain's duty to do it.' Last week, commenting on Jardim's revelations, Thomson accused Shell and BP of having been 'less than frank' with him during this period.

When charged with breaking sanctions, Britain's oil companies have relied heavily on two lines of defence used by Mobil in 1976 when they had to defend themselves against accusations of sanctions busting before the Foreign Relations Committee of the US senate.

First they said that the South African Official Secrets Act – which prevents a South African citizen from telling a foreigner anything about oil sales – made it impossible for the parent company to investigate such charges. Second, they said that the law on 'conditional selling' meant that an oil company had to sell to any customer willing to pay the current price.

Recent revelations effectively kill the first argument as it is now clear that South African employees *were* telling London something of what was going on.

And a careful analysis of the law on 'conditional selling' also suggests that the South African subsidiaries of Shell and BP were *not* obliged to sell to intermediaries which were supplying Rhodesia. Louis Walker, former General Manager of Shell-South Africa, has admitted that in 1966 sales were sometimes refused to customers who were believed to be acting as agents for Rhodesia. In any case, it appears that the 'conditional selling' legislation only applies to legitimate South African customers, and not to purchasers who are acting on behalf of foreign buyers.

In February 1974 BP-South Africa prepared a confidential report – a copy of which was later sent to its head office in London – which made quite clear the whole scheme used by Shell and BP to supply Rhodesia. 'Supplies . . . are effected from South Africa primarily through Freight Services, who act as forwarding agents, buying product from BP and Shell-S.A., and reselling to the Rhodesian Government Procurement Agency GENTA for allocation to marketers . . .'

Yet on 2 September 1976 the UK Government told the UN Sanctions Committee that it had 'accepted the assurances given by Shell and BP that neither they nor any company in which they have an interest have engaged either directly or with others in supplying crude oil or oil products to Rhodesia. This is the same position as that established in 1968, when HMG investigated similar charges at the highest level with the same companies.'

When, in March 1977, Tom Jackson head of the postal worker's union and one of the Government directors on the BP board, heard the allegations of sanctions busting he told the Foreign Office: 'Either the Government takes action or I resign.' Lord Greenhill, the other Government director, may find himself in a rather more difficult position. He has been on the BP board since 1973 and as former head of the diplomatic service, he knows the Rhodesian situation at first hand. It may be hard for him to explain why he did not inquire more closely into BP's involvement in sanctions-busting. Especially as he once served – in 1976 – as an official British government emissary to Salisbury.

Early in April 1977 Foreign Secretary Dr Owen was due to fly out on a safari to Southern Africa, where he was to hold a crucial meeting with President Kaunda – who had not long before practically thrown Ivor Richard out of his office in his rage at British hypocrisy over oil sanctions. The Foreign Secretary, probably concerned that the oil row could split the Commonwealth summit that was due to take place in London two months later, set up an inquiry – headed by Mr Thomas Bingham QC – into how Rhodesia obtained its oil.

The evidence which is now publicly available makes it almost certain that the Bingham Report will be of considerable embarrassment to both the oil companies and the Government.

But when Dr Owen gets the report later this month he is under no obligation to publish it. It could just end up in the Foreign Office's files, at least until after the election. This is no doubt what many of our Foreign Office mandarins would prefer.

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Christopher Hitchens: The Tories rattle their cages at Callaghan and Owen

The Great Reaper has been rather kind to Labour over the past few years. Although there are many old and infirm members on the back benches (most of them, admittedly, in safe industrial seats), they have been clinging on admirably for the most part. The death of Joe Harper last month sent rather a *frisson* through the ranks. What with the pettish behaviour of the Liberals on National Insurance (not to mention the erosion of their standing in the polls), the maddened rage of the Tory pack on Rhodesia, and the ambiguous news from the economy, it was one of those weeks where the Baldwinesque style of Callaghan's government began to look a touch less reassuring than usual. By-elections are just what the Cabinet does not need. Apart from denuding the already non-existent majority, they are of no further real use in 'testing the temperature of the nation'. It's October now, like it or not.

The Rhodesia episode gave a good indication of the Tory mood and mentality. The candour of their racialism was revealing, as was their raucousness. They judge, perhaps rightly, that news of race war in Zimbabwe will reflect badly on the government, especially if (without any direct allegation to that effect) Labour can be identified with 'terrorism'. It wasn't surprising to hear backbenchers like Ian Lloyd shrieking 'This is disgraceful. You are English speaking' at Andrew Faulds. That happens a lot. Usually John Davies sits there looking embarrassed and then makes a statesmanlike summing up of a more or less 'bi-partisan' description. Not so on this occasion. He went right over the top and informed the government:

> Despite all their protestations, can there be any real doubt that the mounting toll of death and mutilation is the responsibility of the Patriotic Front, *and none other*. (Italics mine).

(Not so long ago I talked to Sir Roy Welensky in Salisbury. He was sick of Tories like Julian Amery paying solidarity visits, but on his trips to London had been favourably impressed with Mrs T. 'She had a fellow with her last time we met. Name of Davies.' A pause. Then: 'she surely doesn't mean to make him Foreign Secretary?'.) Running through the whole debate was the Tory assumption that because 'British citizens' were the victims at Umtali there should be some special display of intiative by the government – such as staking all on the moribund 'internal settlement'. The notorious fact that all Rhodesians are British citizens had to be pointed out from the Labour benches by Robert Hughes.

Later in the debate came an interesting interjection from Ian Paisley, who drew a direct analogy between negotiating with the Patriotic Front and treating with the IRA. Both, he said, were equally unacceptable. Ordinarily, the speeches of the 'reverend' are parochial and devoid of interest. But this one came only days after Mrs Thatcher and Airey Neave had paid their visit to Northern Ireland and there made common cause with the Ulster Unionists. Without mentioning power-sharing in her post-prandial speech, Mrs Thatcher promised to restore many of the Protestant privileges in local government and education which the Heath administration had scrapped.

She also undertook to increase Ulster representation in the next Parliament, and generally made her disposition for potential allies in the event of an inconclusive election. This open bid, at the expense of power sharing, for Powellite and Protestant votes, has not so far evoked any response from the Whitelaws of the party. And Airey Neave, who wants censorship of any reports on the Castlereagh barracks, must be relieved that so little has been made in the press of his latest manoeuvre. The new Tory rubric seems to be Keep Britain White and Keep Ulster Orange (and Zimbabwe, one supposes, khaki for a little while yet).

In Peter Kellner's study of the electorate (NS 23 June) there was a fairly steady curve of Labour supremacy in the recent opinion polls, mainly conditioned by attitudes to the management of the economy. The only kink in the graph came when Mrs Thatcher made her ill-tempered bid for the initiative on coloured immigration. Although that was a nine-day wonder, it does seem to have convinced the Tories that there is something in the subliminal approach. Take, for example, the more recent issue of capital punishment. One morning the *Daily Mail*, almost a house organ for the Thatcherites, splashes the news that the Tories will hold a referendum on capital punishment. There is a public brouhaha about it, and other papers recall that the lady has always voted in favour of

the rope. Then, of course, there is embarrassment among Tory liberals and in certain otherwise Conservative papers. After the lapse of a few days it is announced that no such firm decision has been taken by the Shadow Cabinet.

But the necessary effect has been created. Like the policy on immigration or on Rhodesia (where international alliances are involved) there is plenty in the way of get-out clauses and small print. Yet these matters, helped by the lurid coverage of the less expensive newspapers, create a certain atmosphere among the electorate and make Labour feel awkward about its 'soft' positions.

In the face of all this Tory cage-rattling, Labour's leadership still seem to believe that a 'steady as she goes 'approach will pull the government through. Even so, they have taken the precaution of hiring a press advisor from the yellowest end of the market, which shows some sensitivity to the sort of issue the Tories may face them with. (The *Daily Mirror* barons, by the way, are hopping mad at seeing a man from the *Sun* appointed to sit on top of the leak machine. But like all Labour loyalists, they are taken for granted by Number Ten).

The probability is that prices will not rise before October, and that the present boomlet (or boombino?) will persist. Even the TUC leaders were allowed out for an airing this week, blinking in the unaccustomed light. (Those who think they run the country have a lot of explaining to do.) What is not certain is that the electorate will fail to notice that long-run economic indicators are poor. If voters feel they are being conned by a boom, they can visit terrible punishment on the party in power. And those millions of spare Liberal votes may collapse right back where they came from – to the Tories.

Will the Tories be in a fit state to garner them? The present combination of traditional reactionary noises (Rhodesia, Ulster), traditional pseudo-populism (immigration, law and order) certainly satisfies the faithful. But the mean streak and the McCarthyism is offensive to a number of Tories and to the fabled middle ground. The idea is to appeal to these people on a different wavelength, that of 'freedom' – from bureaucracy, from taxation, from 'disincentive' and from controls. Many Tories are starting to believe their own propaganda on this point. Many, but not all. In a new book of Conservative essays, edited by the leading Tory academic Maurice Cowling,* I came across the following passage in his finely-written introduction:

> In the Conservative conception of freedom, in other words, there is a great deal of double-talk and many layers of concealed consciousness. Conservatives, if they talk about freedom long enough, begin to believe that that is what they want. But it is not freedom that Conservatives want; what they want is the sort of freedom that will maintain existing inequalities or restore lost ones, so far as political action can do this.

The purpose of the book is to provide ammunition and reflection for the new version of Conservatism. I recommend that you cut that quotation out and keep it by you for when October comes around.

**Conservative Essays.* Cassell £5.95

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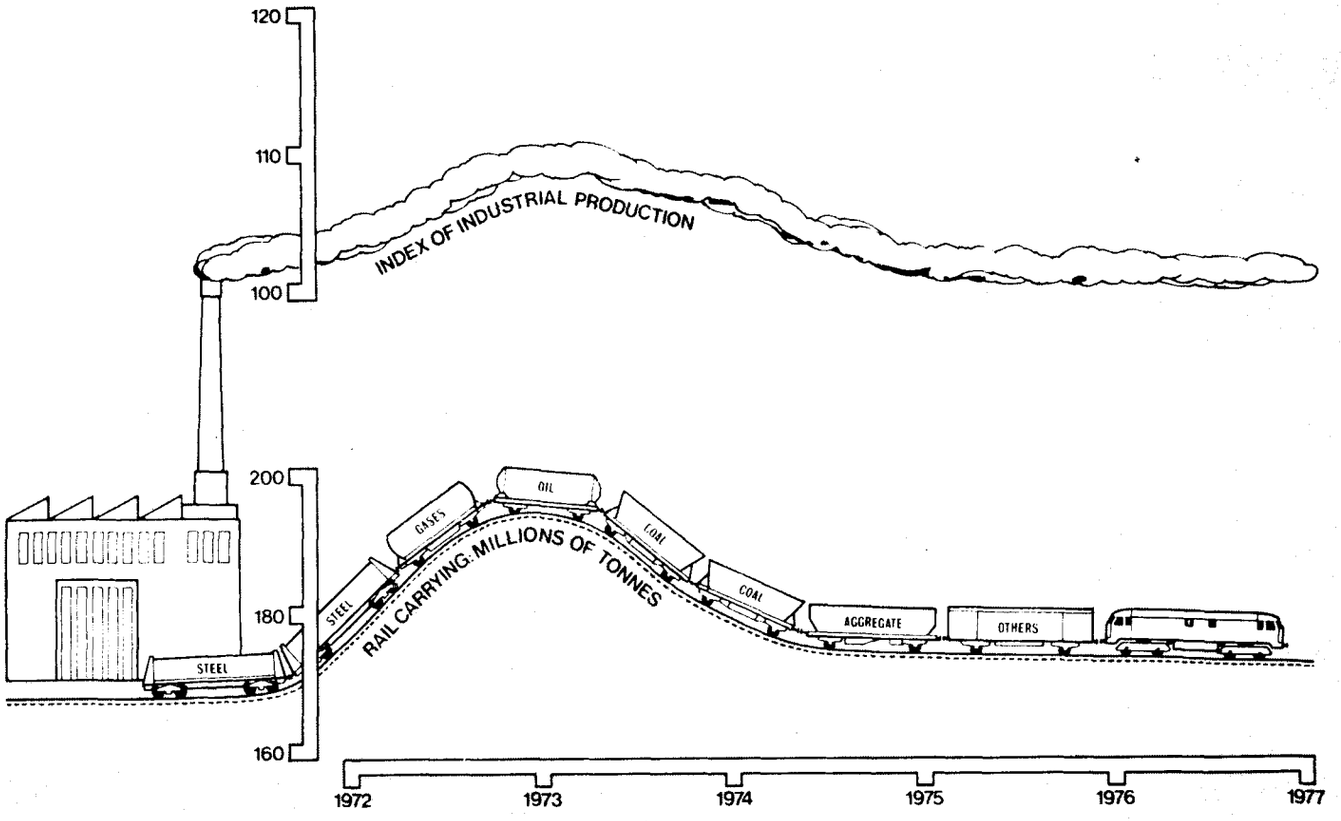

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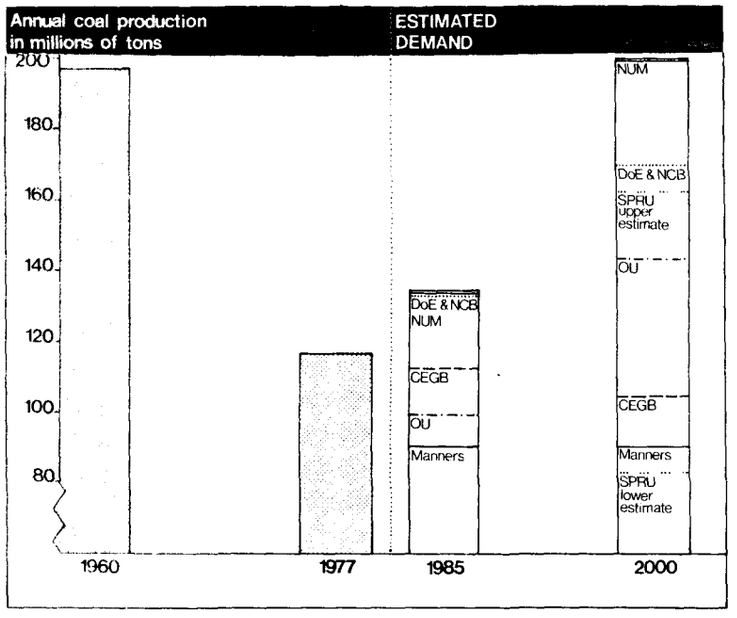
Patrick Wintour: What future for the miners?

The National Union of Miners met this week to air its well-publicised personal and political differences. The internal divisions could not have come at a worse time for the NUM. Experts are increasingly saying that partly due to the recession the NCB's massive expansionary strategy is premature. However, if coal does not invest and expand soon Britain will be without an indigenous energy source in 2000 and probably incapable of withstanding the nuclear power lobby.



The official estimates for future coal demand of the Department of Energy and the NUM are wildly more optimistic than the Central Electricity Generating Board, the Science Policy Research Unit, the Open University Energy Research Group and Dr Gerald Manners of University College, London. (Left) Arthur Scargill and Sir Derek Ezra.

The National Coal Board is approaching a crisis like that of the fifties and sixties which caused the loss of over 400,000 mining jobs, sometimes as many as 50,000 in one year. A growing number of independent analysts, and now even the coal board's own planners are beginning to doubt the NCB's grandiose expansion plans.

Because of the closures of the last two decades, the coming crisis will not be as intense but with falling demand the size of the industry and the political weight of the miners may still be significantly reduced. As nuclear fuel replaces coal the power of the electricians union, run by right winger Frank Chapple, will be increased and so will that of the state, into whose hands more control over energy will be centralised.

In public the NCB is sticking to the *Plan for Coal 1974* – produced under the Labour government in the wake of the massive increase in the price of oil. This put coal at the centre of the energy policy and spoke of increasing output from 120 million tons a year to 135 million by 1985 – involving an investment programme of £3,000 million. Thereafter the government envisaged even more investment and 170m. tons of coal a year by the end of the century. But in the last month energy minister Tony Benn has told his civil servants and the National Union of Miners to look at ways in which this coal can possibly be sold. Gerald Manners, a geographer at the University of London, says such a target 'does not stand up to realistic analysis'. One academic believes that if his projections are right, half the current pits will have to be closed – not just the loss making ones.

The long-term bulwark of the NCB's expansion is that the exhaustion of gas and oil is inevitable. Coal, with nuclear, will fill the British energy gap. Thereafter, coal will still be needed in conversion to oil and gas, whatever decisions are made about fast breeders. This orthodoxy is expounded in a recent book by Sir Derek Ezra, the NCB's chairman.

But in private the argument runs like this: coal's price competitiveness against oil and gas will be much more precarious over the next 15 years than previously thought. After that time it may lose out to nuclear. The only salvation is wage restraint, closures of mines soon, especially in Wales and Scotland, and heavy concentration of investment in a small number of fertile and highly capitalised mines.

The Wales and Scotland areas have been making losses for some time and many pits seem doomed to closure if the NCB are to keep their unit costs down. In an article in the geographical magazine *Area*, Dr Spooner points out that 16 of the 21 major investments planned by the NCB are all in the central Midlands and Yorkshire area. Sir Derek is unapologetic: 'We're not growing radishes, we have to go where the coal is.'

Yorkshire miners leader Arthur Scargill claims to have been sent – anonymously – a secret analysis by the NCB of their Nottingham and Yorkshire area closure programme. It contains the name of every pit that will close and the date. Scargill says it shows that opening the new large pits such as at Selby, which will be five times more productive than the present average, will not increase total output because other Yorkshire pits will be closed. It is notoriously easy to distort the NCB's intentions by saying dramatically that pits will close, because pits close all the time due to exhaustion or danger. However, Scargill argues that on the evidence he has the NCB will be closing pits before their natural death.

Many forecasts support this analysis. The Open University Research Group have just completed a paper on coal and say 'the short term prospects are bleak'. It estimates that Britain will need no more than 100m tons of coal in 1985 and only 143m tons in 2000. The most long-standing and polemical doubter has been Gerald Manners who points out that coal has only two substantial markets, steel and electricity, and that these are exaggerated. Demand elsewhere has slumped from 116m. in 1960 to 26m. tons in 1976. Plentiful gas makes it very unlikely indeed that there will be a demand for up to 80m. tons in these markets by 2000, as predicted by the NCB. Nor is there much sign that British Steel, a notorously inaccurate forecaster, is again going to be an increasing market for coking coal. Last week's corporate plan from the Central Electricity Generating Board was openly anti-coal, saying the miners can't produce and even if they did, it would be costly.

This break with the more diplomatic defence of their conflicting interests, in which the chairmen of the nationalised industries indulge at the Energy Commission, may provoke a big row between them and the government. So far, the government mollifies everyone by assuming that future energy demand and growth will be exceptionally high: nobody's toes are stepped on, everyone's product is needed and difficult choices are avoided. This was the expedient employed by the 1976 government advisory council on research and development (ACORD) projections designed to distribute research funds. High future growth allowed all the competing interests to receive plenty of research grants and investment money.

Since then government forecasts have been more sober. Nevertheless in the February Energy Department Green Paper the low growth forecast – as opposed to the high growth 'reference' case – is presented very murkily with little clarification in the assumptions. This seems to have allowed the government to fudge the figures on the effect of low growth on demand, particularly for coal. Apparently there were large scale battles in the department over this involving their senior statisticians.

The University of Sussex's Science Policy Research Unit have for the last year been working on a forecast of British energy demand and are bemused by the department of energy's figures. Both agree on the total energy consumption in their respective high and low growth projections. They also agree on what high growth means to primary energy demand but not over what low

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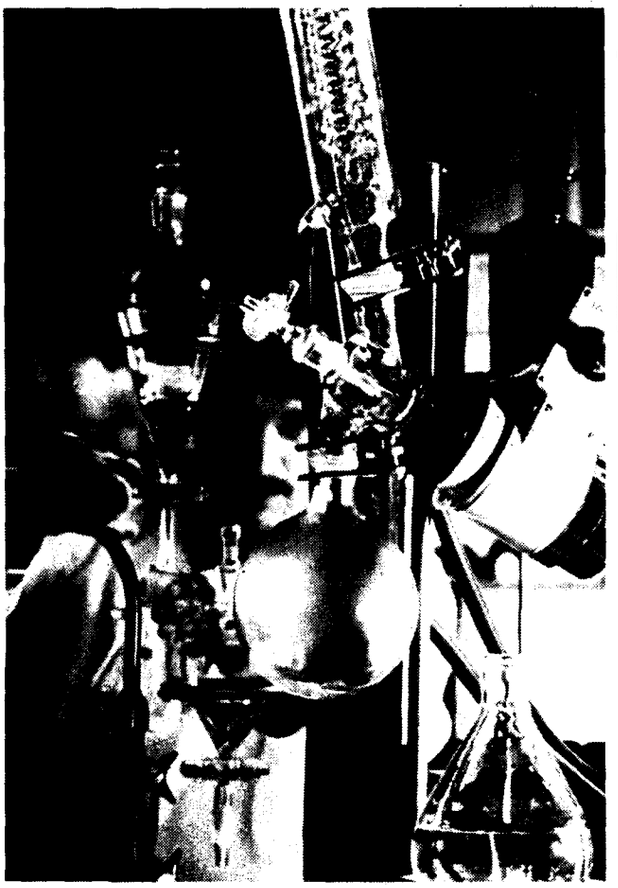
Michael Taylor's research always goes up in smoke.



Left: Research under way in Imperial's own laboratories

Currently the head of the Leaf Physics Group in Imperial Tobacco's Research Department, Michael Taylor has contributed a lot to the development of low tar cigarettes.

"Back in the mid-1960s, we decided, in consultation with the Government, to devote a great deal of time and effort to reducing the "tar yield" of cigarettes. And we've made substantial progress – largely through basic work on cigarette design and specification.

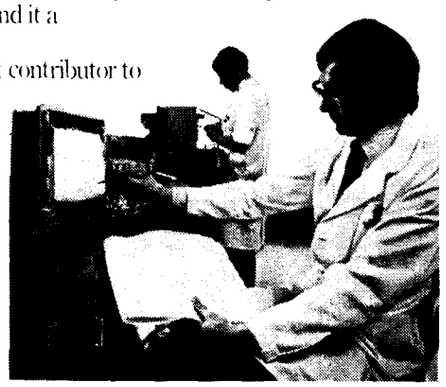
"We've developed new tobacco blends, and found new sources of supply. We've improved the performance of filters substantially. And we've modified the actual cigarette paper a good deal, too.

"All this research and development has contributed to the fact that British smokers today enjoy cigarettes yielding over 40% less tar than they did a few years ago; helped, naturally, by increased advertising and promotion of low-tar brands.

"One of the disciplines which I personally find interesting, is the need to produce improvements which are acceptable to the customer. We're a business, after all, employing more than 20,000 people in the UK alone; and there's no point devising a new cigarette that nobody actually wants to smoke.

"We make a very considerable investment in research and development in Imperial Tobacco; several million a year, in fact. There are a lot of very complicated problems to be solved – but then, the job would hardly be so interesting without them. All in all, I find it a fascinating and worthwhile job."

Michael Taylor, an important contributor to what the Minister of State for Health described last year as the tobacco industry's "long-standing policy of reducing... the tar yield of cigarettes," is just one of the 20,000 people in the UK who make up Imperial Tobacco, the major British-owned tobacco company trading in the United Kingdom and a major taxpayer and investor in Britain's future.



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growth would mean. There is 'a difference of 115 million tons coal equivalent annually between the two respective lower cases (in 2000) . . . it cannot be explained unless a considerably higher level of electricity consumption was assumed (by the DoE). Sussex say the reason for the difference is not clear because the assumptions behind the department's low growth forecast are not sufficiently spelt out. But they are convinced that the department's assumption about electricity consumption is 'implausible'. Lower economic growth and plenty of cheap gas from the Frigg field should mean the electricity market will not grow and therefore neither will coal's. Sussex believe that there might be a potential demand for coal as low as 84 million tons in 2000, compared with the coal board's forecast of 170 million tons.

The whole British coal strategy ultimately rests on a growth in demand for electricity which takes 60 per cent of coal sales. The CEGB have said already they want to take 24m. tons of coal less in 1985 than the 88m. tons planned in the Green Paper. The CEGB computer helps them switch with dazzling speed between coal, oil, gas and nuclear according to price competitiveness. The continuing oil glut, the divisions within the oil producing countries and the decline in the dollar have all helped keep the price of oil down. Yet the Government's forecasts for coal demand assume a highly unlikely coal price advantage over oil of 25 per cent. However, the CEGB say that British coal is not even competitive against other coals; they could save £25m. if they brought 10m. tons all the way from Australia.

In the booming Sixties the CEGB ordered a series of power stations amounting to 19,000 megawatts of which 50 per cent is either oil fired or oil/gas fired, 30 per cent nuclear and only five per cent coal based. Most of these stations will be coming on stream in the next five years. In January Tony Benn announced the authorisation for the building of two further Advanced Gas Cooled Reactors. Already working well under capacity, the CEGB does not need to order more stations immediately. Many existing coal stations are old and comparatively expensive to run, so coal will need an even greater price advantage if the CEGB are to use these stations instead of the oil and nuclear ones. Nor are there any more stations left such as Kingsnorth which can be switched to coal.

One increasingly desperate alternative is to build a massive protected coal market in the EEC. Britain and Germany, Europe's surplus producers, are worried by the increasing imports of coal from Poland. But in the last month a detailed package aimed at subsidising the production of 12m. tons of EEC coal annually has foundered because Tony Benn refused to accept the Italian's argument that the problems of the coal glut should be linked to their oil refinery surplus. The crisis is deepened in that the EEC policy on encouraging the construction of coal-fired stations has been utterly ineffectual.

In Britain the CEGB – although they have scaled down some of their more excited forecasts – are still talking about 60 gigawatts of nuclear power by 2000. This means building 23 nuclear power stations before the end of the century. If this Herculean task were achieved coalmines would become little more than an archaeological curiosity. That is highly unlikely. The real danger is massive surpluses for the next 15 years. The Government and the unions face a range of choices between immense coal subsidies, pit closures or reduced NCB investment which will inhibit coal's capabilities when it is eventually needed.

Brian Wilson: Laughing all the way to the grouse moors

Last week, the Highlands and Islands Development Board published proposals for the extension of their powers over land use. This was in response to recurring criticism of the Board's lack of initiative in dealing with the central problem of the region – grotesque maldistribution of land and its gross underuse by the grandees who still retain their private kingdoms.

The Board wants to designate 'development areas', where there is public concern about existing land use – or the lack of it. Local committees would determine strategies for each area and the Board would then have powers – compulsory purchase in extreme cases – to enforce them.

This sounds like a fine, straightforward idea. But there is widespread scepticism about the possibilities of much ever coming of it. Just a few days before the Board published its proposals, Mr Hugh Brown, Under-secretary of State at the Scottish Office, told his audience at the Royal Highland Show: 'Public opinion is not yet ready for Government interference in how land is used in Scotland.'

Normally when one hears that the public 'is not ready' for something, one takes it to mean that the public is expected to react adversely. The notion that there might be mass public hostility to more modest limits being imposed on the ownership rights of the Duke of Buccleuch (257,000 acres), the Duke of Argyll (128,000) or even the Wills tobacco family (45,700) will be greeted with downright disbelief in most quarters – not least in the headquarters of the Scottish Landowners' Federation. Mr. Brown's remarks typify the extraordinarily timid attitude of successive Labour governments to the land question. The whole history of land ownership in Scotland, from the period of the Highland Clearances onwards, makes it an emotive subject. In spite of the Labour Party's urban orientation there is no more popular demand at its Scottish conferences than the oft repeated – and oft ignored – call for the public ownership of the great estates.

The present government's record on land is deplorable. It took over and enacted Tory legislation relating to the 2,000,000 acres under crofting tenure. The crofters' struggles of a century ago had won them inalienable rights as tenants, while the landlords' rights were virtually nil – a fact reflected in the negligible amounts for which large crofting estates changed hands. Under the new law, however, absentee or disinterested crofters are allowed to buy the land in order to sell to the highest bidder, with a cut for the landlord. Instead of being written off as an anachronism, the private crofting landlord has astonishingly been given a new and increasingly lucrative lease of life.

All this was, of course, in flagrant contradiction of longstanding Labour Party policy. A golden opportunity to bring these vast areas under community control was lost. Now, when challenged on the question of land reform, the government hides behind the figleaf of the Northfield Committee although the Committee is confidently expected to find very little wrong with the status quo. Its membership includes a majority with vested interests in private landownership or management, a former agricultural correspondent of the *Daily Express*, a couple of academics and a solitary representative from the National Union of Agricultural Workers.

Even the modest demand for a land register has repeatedly been turned down by the Government. At present, it needs continuous investigation on a prodigious scale to keep track of who owns which tract of land. The real owners have a habit of hiding behind homely local titles which are often registered in the Isle of Man or beyond.

The publication last year of a book entitled *Who Owns Scotland?* gave new impetus to the demand for a simplified land register. The author John McEwan is 91 and a lifelong forester, socialist and advocate of land nationalisation. Working from estate maps drawn up in 1968, he set himself the Herculean task of measuring the acreage of all Scottish estates and identifying their owners. As he is the first to recognise, some of his findings are already out of date, but it remains the most comprehensive and valuable attempt at a register of land ownership to be compiled this century.

Many people find it offensive that mere money or inheritance should entitle mortals to lay claim to 'ownership' of mountains and rivers, fish and birds. But the most pressing and persuasive argument in favour of land reform is that, having laid claim to title, the landlords then put their property to very little productive use.

The Highlands and Islands Development Board's proposals just might encourage them to look afresh at the wasted acres, tens of thousands of which are capable of providing food, trees and jobs. More probably, the landowners will dig in their heels and laugh all the way to the grouse moors.

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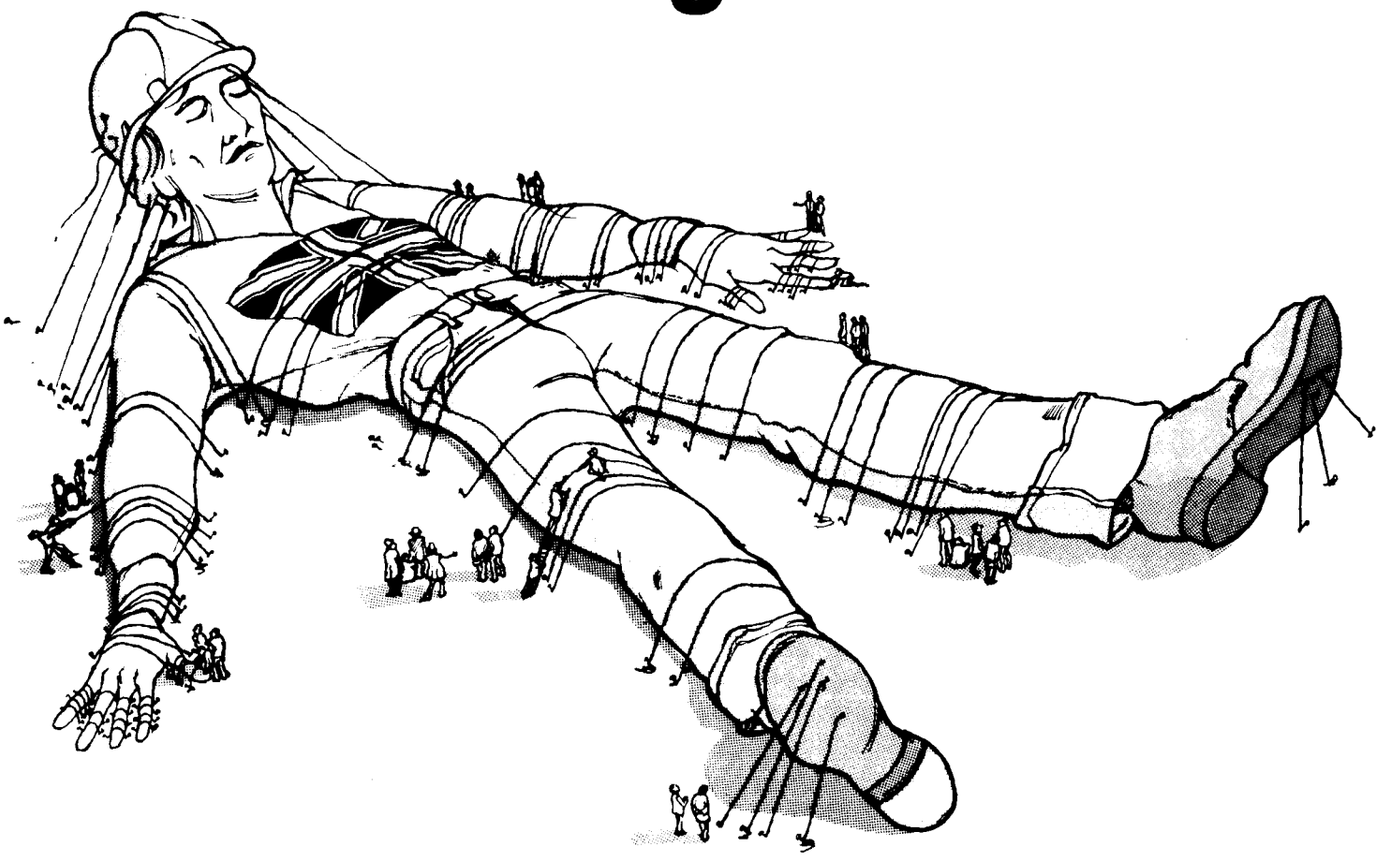
Isn't it time we got this one off the ground?



It's taken a lot of planning to get us where we are today.

Into the state where the "pound in your pocket" is worth about half what it was four years ago; where over a million people in the UK are unemployed; where industrial productivity gives constant cause for concern.

Isn't it time we started making use of the talents and opportunities we have–rather than dreaming up six new regulations for every new idea?

Haven't we learned yet that nationalisation, apart from being unpopular, is often just a way to build up bureaucracy at the expense of efficiency and choice?

Shouldn't we be encouraging investment in new industries, new techniques and new jobs–rather than treating anyone who saves and invests as some kind of criminal to be taxed into the ground?

And might it not be that if we freed enterprise to do the job it's good at–providing goods and services competitively, economically and efficiently–we'd *all* benefit?

Free enterprise may not be perfect.

But when you think what the opposite has done for us, it can't help looking good.

Support free enterprise and keep Britain's builders free.

TAYLOR WOODROW

Keep Britain's Builders Free

Freedom needs free enterprise

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Profile:

Sir Maurice Oldfield of the Secret Intelligence Service – original of 'George Smiley' in the Le Carré spy novels

The Honourable Grammar Schoolboy

In a secret world the best cover may be to play yourself. The casual stroller who finds his way up from the valley of the Lathkill to the hill village of Over Haddon will not give a second glance to the rumpled, homespun figure in transit between farmhouse and cowshed. The face is not bucolic; behind the owlish spectacles it almost has a look of Sartre, transposed from *Les Deux Magots*. But on this farm, at the local point-to-point, or on a London street corner, it will fit in, as though its owners were a living approximation of Le Carré's espionage organiser George Smiley, who 'learns to love the crowds who pass him in the street without a glance' and hopes to pass as 'the very prototype of an unsuccessful bachelor in a sedentary occupation.'

The stroller will pass on. The bystander will not linger. Sir Maurice Oldfield, GCMG, outgoing Director of the Secret Intelligence Service (MI6) will potter about his brother's farm unnoticed.

He has been the most successful of bachelors, and his occupation has not always been sedentary; a professional who has risen right through the ranks of S.I.S., and who will be able to retire without scandal or fuss, unlike some of his more gilded predecessors. How has such a man become the head of a profession which the creations of fiction, and the catastrophes of fact, describe as being run by a public school freemasonry decked out with matching wives and appropriate country retreats? Oldfield has never acquired a wife, nor a Thames Valley paddock.

The farm which is his 'lung' is the one where he was born, the eldest of the eleven children of Joe Oldfield, a Derbyshire farmer. His mother still lives there. Scholarships took him to the local grammar school, Lady Manners, and then to Manchester University. Without them he would have stayed on the farm, as his brothers did. They took him to read history under the instruction of Namier, Jacob and a young don called A. J. P. Taylor – to a First, and a fellowship at Hulme Hall. When the Second World War came, he would have thought himself on the way to being a medieval historian. That vocation he was to lay aside for forty years.

Oldfield volunteered for the Intelligence Corps, and found his way out to the Canal Zone. Intelligence Corps men served in small units, but in them you could be trapped for a long, long time. Lance-Corporal Oldfield was put in charge of stores. One night he had to turn out the guard for the duty officer, Captain Monty Trethowan – uncle of the BBC Director General. Trethowan lingered, asked questions of the Lance-corporal who was Jones History Fellow at Manchester. Dispositions were made; Oldfield began to move into and up through SIME – Security Intelligence Middle East – ending the war as a lieutenant colonel.

His first field of expertise was therefore the forces of nationalism in the Middle East, interrogating and screening interned Syrian nationalists in Beirut, and later in Egypt after the Moyne assassination. His acquaintance with some of the principal actors in the Middle East drama goes back to then.

He came home to be de-mobilised in 1946. The academic career beckoned, secure, prestigious. But his boss in SIME, Brigadier Roberts, was moving across into S.I.S., to succeed the Russian 'mole', Philby, in charge of the anti-Communist section of S.I.S. (The transfer came after Philby had arranged the liquidation of the would-be defector Volkov in Istanbul; the one man, perhaps, who had the silver bullet which could have slain him).

Philby relates in his memoirs, which were designed as a custom-built denigration of the colleagues he had previously betrayed, that Oldfield was known as 'the Brig's brains.' Brigadier Roberts brought his young officer with him. Maurice Oldfield it turned out had signed up for the duration.

He must have been a puzzle for the club-land heroes when they checked his traces. No broad acres, no school chums, just a farm in the village and several generations of Oldfields buried in Bakewell churchyard. 'This chap has not just got grass roots, but gravestones as well', they reported back.

The accident of war had broken open the secret world: intellectually competent recruits were jostling the absurd Sapper-esque figures who once ran the show. The victory, however, was far from complete: indeed, the old-line S.I.S. operators, chiefly by attracting credit that should have gone to other organisations, retained a good deal of their power and authority. This they used to set up a new section in 1944, targeted against world communism, with Kim Philby at its head.

Maurice Oldfield knew nothing of the wartime S.I.S. He had been in the Middle East throughout. Now in 1947 he joined a service that was re-building its links to a very different world. Over large parts of it the imperium of the colonial powers had collapsed, or was tottering. In South East Asia and the whole Far East there were no networks. In his memoirs Philby has much sport with the butt of Section IX, a certain Steptoe of Shanghai 'who had covered the whole Far East for S.I.S. between the wars.'

Under the Attlee government there were demarcation arguments with M.I.5, which had the right to operate unimpeded in British or former British territories. And as the Cold War intensified, there were mutual suspicions and rivalries with the infant CIA. In some operations the British approach bewildered the Americans, one of whom remembers coming to London to discuss the ill-fated Albanian venture with the S.I.S. hierarchy. 'After sitting around a table in desultory fashion for an hour or two, one Englishman finally said, "I say, why don't we get old Henry up here? He knows about this". A day or two later old Henry finally showed up from down in Sussex and . . . agreed to undertake the task, although as he said, "This will wreak havoc with the garden, you know. Just getting it into trim." '

What was being discussed was nothing less than an attempt to foment a nationalist, anti-Communist uprising in Albania – with the hope that it might provide some model for the destabilisation of Communist regimes in other places behind the Iron Curtain. 'Old Henry' might risk his garden, but the Albanians involved were risking their lives. And of course, S.I.S. had yet to figure out which side Kim Philby was playing on.

All in all, S.I.S. was a long time getting into trim. The Albanians were betrayed, and went to their deaths. Philby remained undetected, in spite of the fact that his Communist allegiances had been obvious to more than one person since the very early thirties. But still, the trail was leading slowly and haphazardly towards him.

Ever since 1944 both intelligence services had been analysing an intercepted Russian signal from Washington which indicated that there were leaks from the British Embassy in Washington, and from Los Alamos. One of Oldfield's last tasks before he departed for an overseas station in Singapore was to brief Philby, who had been posted to Washington, on the state of this investigation. Oldfield already suspected that seedy charmer in a general way, and ever since the Volkov case it had been possible to argue that there was somewhere in S.I.S. the smiler with the knife who must

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be responsible. (Volkov was a Russian agent who tried to defect in Istanbul with information that there was a Soviet agent high-up in the British service. The case was given to . . . Philby, who arranged for Volkov to come to a sticky end.) The flight of Donald Maclean, accompanied by Philby's drunken house-guest in Washington, Guy Burgess, confirmed the suspicions. Five years later the fiasco of Commander Crabbe's dive in Portsmouth harbour completed the convulsion, bringing Sir Dick Goldsmith White over from M.I.5 to pull the cowboys of S.I.S. into order.

It takes one professional to appreciate another, and under White Oldfield's career flourished. He had a long career in the field, with two stints in South-East Asia – a brilliant case officer, able to be ruthless when required – and had already switched to administration when he was 'blown' in Philby's memoirs. Liberal by inclination, moralist by temperament, he was never carried away by the excesses which disfigured the CIA. In 1966, when White retired, the new Labour Government might have been expected to look on a man like Oldfield with interest. But George Brown found him donnish and severe: Sir John Rennie, a diplomat from the customary background, was appointed.

It was, in the end, under Edward Heath that the grammar schoolboy inherited the secret world. They are the same age: bachelor meritocrats with a love of music, though the man of the shadows is more convivial than the politician. A series of postponements of a retirement due at 60 have brought Oldfield to 1978 still in command. His dumpy figure is familiar at the Athenaeum, though he is usually on his way somewhere: knowing that the hands he will shake at the end of the journey, like the information he trades, may well be bloodstained.

The society he protects has rewarded him with the baubles of rank. He has moved steadily upwards through the hierarchy of St Michael and St George. His father, the old farmer, was there to see his first visit to the Palace in 1956, and his mother lived to see him get his knighthood on the same day as Charlie Chaplin. In his small London flat, stuffed with antiquarian books about his native Derbyshire, the photo that has pride of place is of Joe Oldfield carrying his pail across the yard at Over Haddon – a journey his son still makes at weekends.

There has been no marriage, for he has come through, and is still part of, more disparate worlds than he would ask any woman to inhabit. So parental pride is transferred to nieces and nephews, and to that wider family who remain in the shadows from which Maurice Oldfield himself will only reluctantly emerge.

If he has to be photographed, he will somehow contrive to slide to the side and the rear of the group. If he wants to pass out information it will appear indirectly and tangentially, then tail off like a comet in the night. Though he did not deliberately inspire Le Carré's fictional Smiley, he seems to have many shared characteristics.

What has it all been for, this forty years away from the academic world – to which he will return at the end of this year with a visiting fellowship at All Souls? There will be no explanatory memoirs. He despises those who snatch credit and copyright for the work of hundreds who dwelt in necessary obscurity. If asked, he would say what Smiley says in closing his own account at the end of *The Honourable Schoolboy*, but without the bitter qualifications – 'I chose the secret road because it seemed to lead straightest and furthest to my country's goal.' He has not been betrayed, like Smiley, nor sold out to the American 'cousins'.

Certain questions abide. In the secret world, power accumulates. Intelligence can be misused, by Hoover, by Helms, by the men of S.I.S. and M.I.5. If Maurice Oldfield has been feared (and one public figure will cross the street rather than meet that appraising gaze) it has been by people who deserve to fear him. The Pencourt account of him being called in by a paranoid Harold Wilson to discuss right-wing cells in M.I.5 appears to be largely fictional. But Harold Wilson would not be the only person to fear a right-wing bias in the intelligence services. Too many of those have surfaced in the overground world of right-wing politics and Mayfair security firms.

It is the fear that men who trade information with SAVAK and BOSS will see no enemies on the Right, no friends on the Left. Oldfield and his immediate successors are of the wartime generation: they still carry the stamp and the memory of that struggle and of the hopes for the re-building of the post war world. As the Oldfield generation bows out, what kind of recruits are taking their place? The supply of bright young linguists doing National Service in the Intelligence Corps has long since dried up. What kind of a job specification is it anyway? The old loyalties and certainties are fissured. The young take their society and its defences for granted. What then will stop the gaps being filled by S.A.S. officers retired from the colours, and right-wing ideologues gullible enough to swallow every story provided it is red? Maurice Oldfield's circle is a wide one, and so is his definition of patriotism; his recruits will for a time bear his stamp. But as he looked down on the demonstrators who had crossed the river to march on his office block to protest at the deportation of Agee and Hosenball, did he comprehend what motivates them? Will his successors be more or less able to understand?

In *The Human Factor* a particularly nasty S.I.S. type uses a Ben Nicholson painting as a visual aid for his dimly decent subordinate: 'That's your square from now on. You don't need to worry about the blue and the red. All you have to do is to pinpoint our man and then tell me. You've no responsibility for what happens in the blue or red squares. In fact not even in the yellow. You just report.' But the head of S.I.S. must have a view of the whole picture, and see that others can have it too. Otherwise, what are they fighting for? It is the achievement of Maurice Oldfield that he leaves S.I.S. still concerned with both the red and the blue squares. It is his misfortune that the conventions of his trade prevent him making his case to those who have never known him, for the strength of the case is simply the probity of its advocates. Even those who think S.I.S. expensive or otiose would admit that Maurice Oldfield is retreating towards All Souls with his personal probity intact.

'We are approaching the nuclear age in the Middle East. Israel is already nuclear, the Arab countries are bound to acquire a military nuclear option. A Middle Eastern nuclear jungle is not a very pleasant scenario to contemplate'
Walid Khalidi, Palestinian historian

Palestine

three 90-minute films from Thames Television on the tragic decades that gave birth to Israel.

10.30 Tuesdays on ITV. 11 July: Programme 3, *Abdication*.

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Douglas Johnson: Philosophy, and the crisis of French Communism

Officially, there is no crisis in the French Communist Party. Criticisms voiced in the bourgeois press are said to come entirely from a few intellectuals. As the Secretary General, Georges Marchais, puts it: 'The intellectual seated at his desk' cannot speak for the 600,000 official members, nor the 100,000 active militants in France's greatest mass political organisation.

Louis Althusser, whom Marchais has in mind, originally put forward his views in four devastating articles in *Le Monde*, which have since been republished as *Ce qui ne peut plus durer dans le parti communiste francais* ('What cannot go on in the French Communist Party'). He enlarged upon his position at a recent seminar in London – an occasion which was all the more important because his ideas have been subject to a great deal of misinterpretation, some deliberate.

Althusser has been depicted (even by the *Economist*) as the leader of the orthodox Stalinists, in contrast to the other most notable dissident, Jean Elleinstein, who is presented as a liberal and near social-democrat. Althusser protests that this is not true, and that even if there are now points of difference between himself and Elleinstein, in time these will disappear.

This distinguished Marxist and structuralist philosopher, who has sometimes seemed more at home with concepts than with activism, now sees his function as re-defining communist ideology. He does not want a break-away movement, believing that the existing structure of the Communist Party (though probably not the existing leadership) can re-establish contact with the masses. It is the failure to have done this which he considers to be the party's greatest weakness.

His starting point is national. He rejects the facile Eurocommunism which so many people in England think of as the most significant of recent developments. Naturally, he says, all European communist parties have to adapt their Stalinist structures to the contemporary world, but each party will do so in its own way: the Italian party, for example, has coped in one particular way as a result of 'the accident of Gramsci'; France will cope in another.

The present state of the French Communist Party can, in Althusser's analysis, be traced to three factors. The first is a long series of disappointments going back to the failure of the 1936 Popular Front Government and the Spanish Civil War: little seems to have been achieved in the time that elapsed between the high hopes and heroism of the Resistance and the Liberation, and the dashed expectations of last March. Second, there is the experience of having taken Soviet Russia as a model society, only to be undermined by the Krushchev report and by subsequent events. Finally, there is the fact that the leadership of the French Communist Party is at present divided.

Within the Political Bureau there are two tendencies. The one led by Marchais and Paul Laurent (who have broken with Elleinstein, once their friend and ally) is in favour of attaining a communist democracy, by democratic means. This is what Althusser terms *'l'aventurisme démocratique'*. The other tendency, led by Roland Leroy, the director of *L'Humanité*, would be prepared to see a smaller, tougher party, which would maintain a rigid doctrinal purity, and which would have as its first priority the discrediting of the Socialists and any alliance with them. (Somewhere between Marchais and Leroy is the mysterious figure of the 64-year-old Gaston Plissonnier, the organisation man who has disappeared within the organisation, and who probably prevents either side from being completely logical.) Thus Marchais dares not allow full liberty of discussion, and Leroy protests that it is for technical reasons that he cannot allow Althusser to air his views in *L'Humanité*.

It is hard to think of any professional philosopher whose views about the tactics and politics of a major British political party would be listened to with any serious attention. But French politics are not like British politics. When Louis Althusser, professor of philosophy at the Ecole Normale Supèrieure in Paris, published his views in the aftermath of the French Left's defeat in the parliamentary elections last March, it was a major event in the history of the French Communist Party. Althusser is not only the most prestigious of intellectuals in the Party; he also comes as close as anyone to inheriting the mantle once worn by Jean Paul Sartre as the Father Confessor of the intellectual Left.

Althusser will not resign from the party, and he does not think the leadership is strong enough to expel him. Nor will he associate too closely with the Trotskyists, anarchists and left-wing socialists, as Elleinstein did when he spoke recently at a meeting organised by the leftist journal *Rouge*. Althusser does not believe the essential problem lies in the organisation of the party and the system of democratic centralism. For him, this apparatus is essential and he would probably agree with Marchais that the Party should not seek to be a simple reflection of society as a whole. He maintains, instead, that within this framework there should be a certain freedom and movement. Discussion should be possible within the cells. A militant should be able to write to the Central Committee and have the right to a reply. And above all, the secrecy with which the Political Bureau has surrounded itself should be ended.

To those who accuse him of 'fractionalism', Althusser replies that he knows no fractionalism more blatant than Marchais's announcement on television that the party was abandoning the doctrine of the dictatorship of the proletariat, or Marchais's decision to keep parts of reports secret and then to reveal them purely at his convenience. It is the practice rather than the principle of democratic centralism that Althusser is attacking. He is equally non-dogmatic in his references to Marxism. He is interested in Marx's method, in the logic of his thought, in the contingencies which surround his principles, in the gaps which exist in his political conceptions. Thus Marxism becomes more supple, the basis of a continuing analysis of events, rather than a set of ideas in which all has been foreseen.

However, the main subject for discussion is not Althusser's approach to Marxism, but his views on the Twenty-Second Congress of the French Communist Party which in 1976 confirmed the Marchais line. This sought to represent the Communists as a modern, democratic party purged of some of its ideological deadweight (such as the dictatorship of the proletariat, or blind loyalty to the Soviet Union). Far from being hostile to the decisions of the Congress, as is often claimed, Althusser wants their implications to be examined – a work which very few Party members, if any, have so far undertaken.

Althusser accepts that France needs to develop its own form of socialism *'aux couleurs de la France'*. He accepts that socialism can be achieved by legal and pacific means, although not without difficulties, which he insists should be analysed. The main point of his dissent is this: in order to establish links with other parties, or with individuals who did not belong formally to any political organisation, the French Communist Party had to choose whether it was going to be a purely electoral union, organised at the summit, or a form of union which existed at the roots of political and social action – and it opted for the former. That, for Althusser, was its big mistake. Not only did the party fail to opt for union in terms of political protest, but it also positively prevented the formation of action committees.

'A quoi sert, Althusser?' demanded the Sorbonne graffiti in 1968. ('What's the use of Althusser?') Now the hierarchies of both the Communist and Socialist parties cry 'Who's afraid of Althusser?' as they denounce a movement not so much as a faction but as a *fronde*. Althusser will not be a leader; others will lead for a time, then disappear – as they should within a movement which aims to have a mass base. Althusser is not attempting to destroy the Communist Party as a disciplined and coherent organisation. He has no idealistic illusion about changing the world. He is trying, by means of specific, practical measures, to unite Marxism and democracy.

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Interim Statement

for the half year ended 30th April 1978

Trading Receipts and Profit	Half Year to 30th April 1978 £m	Half Year to 30th April 1977 £m	% Increase
Trading Receipts	**270.1**	237.3	**14%**
Trading Profit	**19.8**	15.2	**30%**
Profits less losses on sale of fixed assets and investments	**—**	4.1	
	19.8	19.3	
Financial charges	**(7.4)**	(8.8)	
	12.4	10.5	
Minority interest	**(0.2)**	(0.1)	
Profit before Taxation	**12.2**	10.4	

The above figures are unaudited and include the full half year's profits for the hotels acquired from Lyons (1977—3 months) and Knott (1977—2 months). The 1977 profits include 5 months profit of Terrys up to its date of disposal.

The above profits are after charging depreciation of £6.9m (1977 £6.5m) but are before adjusting for taxation and currency translation differences.

Taxation for the half year to 30th April 1978 is estimated at £5.3m (1977—£2.4m).

The first half year's trading produces only a small proportion of the year's profit owing to the seasonal nature of our business. An encouraging start has been made and bookings are satisfactory. We look forward with confidence to another successful year.

The interim dividend has been increased to 2.85p per share (1977—2.25p) in respect of the year to 31st October, 1978 and this will be paid on 2nd October, 1978 to shareholders on the register on 4th September, 1978.

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– provides service to our customers!
We are spending £25,000,000 on improving our UK hotels this year.

– takes its responsibilities seriously!
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Symbol, power & tragedy in Ulster

On the tenth anniversary of the disturbances which brought Ulster and its 'dreary quarrel' – Churchill's phrase – back into British politics, movement appears impossible. Things jog bloodily along, with hope reduced to the possibility of one or more contestants becoming exhausted. In the whole decade, there was one moment when dramatic change seemed likely: the time of the Sunningdale Agreement with the power-sharing executive which collapsed in the Ulster Workers' Council strike of May 1974. Was it defeated by accidents, or by remorseless truths of Irish history? ROGER DARLINGTON, *who was political adviser to Merlyn Rees when the executive fell, uses new information from the memoirs* of the late Brian Faulkner (right) to investigate these questions.*

I first met Brian Faulkner as the Unionist hardliner: in August 1972, he was tense and bitter about the suspension of Stormont and his 'betrayal' by Edward Heath. Two years later, I heard him speak at a private conference just after the collapse of the power-sharing system: he spoke movingly, and warmly, about the Catholic and non-sectarian politicians who had been with him in the experiment. It is a remarkable political environment in which the architect of internment in 1971 could undergo so dramatic a transformation.

Part of the explanation is that Faulkner understood that Irish political positions are especially likely to concern symbol rather than substance. We now learn, for instance, that it was Faulkner's idea that in Clause 5 of the Sunningdale Agreement, the statements of the British Government and the Irish Government on the status of Northern Ireland should be printed *side-by-side.*

This was not a trivial matter. In responding to the first reports of the Sunningdale Communiqué, Jack Lynch, then in opposition, was distinctly unhelpful. Two days later Merlyn Rees and I saw him in Dublin: he had meanwhile learnt of the form in which the statements had been set out, and this transformed his assessment of their acceptability.

Unhappily, Faulkner was not always so deft with 'necessary nonsense' (his phrase). It is now clear that he allowed Edward Heath to push him further than was tolerable to Protestants towards making the Council of Ireland *look* like a real executive body.

Faulkner's strength and weaknesses had common origin, in that he was a prime example of the businessman in politics: shrewd, pragmatic, energetic, but without ideological concerns. He was thus able to adopt and discard positions with bewildering rapidity. He believed his actions to be honourable and right – certainly they were brave – but in the end the Protestant community lost touch with his mental processes, and deserted him.

We shall have to wait until 2003, given present policy, to see the official record of the Sunningdale conference: even then, it will be only a partial revelation, for due to Irish objections, there were no minutes kept. (The British, notwithstanding, made detailed notes of the plenary sessions.) Meanwhile, Faulkner's account, and his description of the preliminary negotiations at Stormont Castle, is indispensable.

Clearly William Whitelaw's chairmanship at Stormont was patient, sensitive and interventionist. Whenever deadlock was reached, discussion was postponed for fresh analysis. Equally, it is clear that at Sunningdale Heath leaned hard on the Faulkner Unionists to accept that the Council of Ireland should have a role in Northern Ireland police affairs.

'All of us in the Unionist deputation', Faulkner writes, 'were convinced that we had come off best at Sunningdale . . . one member . . . remarked that Sunningdale would go down in history as a Unionist victory.' Yet in the elections of 1973 most Faulkner supporters had *not* voted for a Council of Ireland with executive powers – and even if Heath did not recognise this, Faulkner should have done. In this case Faulkner the businessman seems to have looked only at the practical effect – which could not, in terms of regular police operations, have been great. But the Protestants of Northern Ireland showed themselves to be as closely wedded to their symbolism as the Catholics.

To Faulkner, it appears that power-sharing failed in part because there were simply too many loose ends left over when the negotiators left Sunningdale. The agreement was signed on 9 December 1973, but not ratified, which led many people to think that negotiation and pressure could continue. Would earlier ratification have given it a chance of practical acceptance?

Faulkner clearly never knew that, by a curious irony, Merlyn Rees went to Dublin on the day before the strike began and made arrangements for ratification: it would probably have taken place at a morning conference in London on 31 May 1974.

Yet the power-sharing Executive might well have collapsed anyway. Some people have described it as a brilliant team; Faulkner admits that its administrative efficiency has been exaggerated, and some ministers and officials at the Northern Ireland Office had stronger reservations. Before the strike, Paddy Devlin was on the verge of resignation over the executive's determination to impose collective charges on rent and rate strikers. Even more serious, though it has never been disclosed publicly, is the fact that the whole Executive was shaping up to a collision with the Westminster government over the financing of the Northern Ireland administration's over-ambitious Social and Economic Plan. This would have required, over five years extra expenditure of £570 million and the official view was that such sums could neither be found, nor properly distributed.

Faulkner makes it very clear that in his view Merlyn Rees ought to have used troops and police to break the Protestant strike. Only a handful of people – and neither Faulkner nor myself is one of them – have a sufficient detailed knowledge of the intelligence reports on the security system to be able to reach a balanced view on whether it could have been done. But two things are certain. First, if troops could ever have contained and ended the strike, they would have had to act in the first day or two. Yet very few people – not even Faulkner – realised that it would become so effective so quickly. Second, once the UWC had control of the power supplies, Northern Ireland was already on the knife-edge. We discovered later that if the electricity system had actually been closed down for 12 hours it would have taken three weeks to restart.

That the Executive seemed credible at all, and came near to success, was largely due to Faulkner's organisational skills. His grandfather and his father were both businessmen: he tells us that he was the first boy allowed to manage the shop at his school, and he made it into a profitable operation for the first time in its life. The war forced him to leave university and become production manager of the family's shirt factory when he was eighteen: he worked there for the next 22 years, only withdrawing when his appointment as Minister of Commerce brought a risk of conflict of interest. Eight of Faulkner's fourteen years as a minister were spent in management-oriented departments; after an excellent performance at Commerce between 1963 and 1969, he was Minister of Development from 1969 to 1971. When it was all over, he returned naturally to industry: acting, among other things, as European consultant for Goodyear International.

Faulkner would not have been taken for a man of the right except amid the distorted politics of Ireland: leaving religious badges aside, he was in reality a man of the pragmatic centre.

He understood much of the symbolic character of his system, but in the end it overcame him. Faulkner's failure began with the fact that he campaigned in 1973 on the promise that he would not 'participate in government with those whose primary objective is to break the Union with Great Britain' – which to Protestants meant the SDLP and the Alliance. Then, of course, he did enter government with them. They had, he judged, made workable concessions. It was, rather obviously, the only workable compromise. But Faulkner's tragedy – a tragedy for Ireland as a whole – was that what to him appeared as honest necessity appeared as rank betrayal to most of his followers.

* *Memoirs of a Statesman*, by Brian Faulkner, ed. John Houston Whitehead & Sweetman, £6.95.

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Gitta Sereny: Building up defences against the Hitlerwave

A few weeks ago in this magazine, I wrote about the 'Hitlerwave' in Germany, and the deep need of young Germans for information about their country's past – a need satisfied too often by mere commercialisers, and sometimes by people who are little more than apologists for Nazism. Last weekend, in the 12th century North Bavarian town of Aschaffenburg, the Hitlerwave gave birth to a remarkable phenomenon.

In the first of what are planned as annual 'Discussions on Controversies of our Time' – funded by the municipality – a panel of speakers from several countries and several disciplines debated the theme of 'Hitler Today'. From Britain, the best-selling writer David Irving arrived, and defended his hare-brained argument that Hitler was not aware of the fate of the European Jews.

What was heartening was that before an audience amplified through 32 newspapers and three television channels, Irving's arguments – and his approach to history – were totally rejected. 'This has cost me thousands of sympathisers in Germany', he said over lunch. It was, no doubt, all the more of a shock to him, coming after the relatively kindly reception in British academic reviews, of his book *Hitler's War*, in which he purports to have represented the Second World War from 'Hitler's point of view'.

There have of course been thousands of TV and university discussions about Hitler in Germany, but this was probably the first in which the public was promised, and given, a voice. The experts on the platform – among them the historians Eberhard Jackel of Stuttgart and Albrecht Tyrell of Bonn, the Germanist J. P. Stern of London University, former *Observer* columnist Sebastian Haffner, and prize-winning filmmaker Hans-Jürgen Syberberg – showed remarkable feeling for the largely lay audience, many of them young.

Dr Werner Maser, recently much-publicised for his 'discovery' of a possible Hitler son, did little better than Irving. For 38 minutes, Maser lamented his supposed maltreatment by the international press over a discoverey which he admitted to be trivial. 'I don't believe a thing you say about him', snapped Professor Jackel. 'But if he is so unimportant, and I so agree with you, *why* do you persist in dishing him up?'

David Irving had proposed to invite some 50 former Nazi bigwigs to lend him their support. The organisers reduced this to five – among them a former Hitler aide, Richard Schulze Kossens, who last year – though unwittingly as he hadn't understood Irving's thesis – lent Irving a hand on the David Frost show. Another Irving guest, who slipped in under an assumed name, was the aged SS general Karl Wolff, one-time head of Himmler's personal staff, whose deplorable record contrasts with his charm of manner.

Called on by Irving to authenticate Himmler's masseur, Kersten, Wolff declined on the grounds that he needed to keep his knowledge till he could find a publisher for his memoirs. 'As you know' he said, 'the German government has refused pension rights to former men of the Waffen SS.' 'I should hope so', commented Professor Tyrell audibly.

Irving gained some sympathy with a crisp attack on the 'old-fashioned' research methods of establishment historians, claiming that they merely copied out each others books. He, on the other hand, spent long hours listening to the stories of aged widows, admiring their bric-a-brac and the views from their windows – so as to be able to come out with valuable, unpublished diaries of field marshals and politicians. He immediately lost all sympathy by claiming that *only* he consulted original sources, and that German historians otherwise were merely climbing on a conventional bandwagon of all-embracing Hitler-condemnation.

Irving clearly has little understanding of contemporary Germans: he lives in a world of has-beens, plus perhaps a few neo-Nazi sympathisers, failing to see that special pleading on Hitler's behalf does not pass muster merely by clothing it in laborious detail.

When during Sunday's public forum, one young member of the audience asked Professor Jäckel to take Irving on in general debate, Jackel replied that he was willing, but that he had already twice refuted Irving's thesis in print. Turning to Irving, he said: 'On your own admission, you are a man who does not read books; you cannot hear arguments; you only listen to yourself. With a man such as you a dialogue is impossible.'

Finally one of Irving's guests from yesteryear – an urbane Austrian, formerly of the Nazi Admiral Canaris's staff – rose to regret the possibility that Irving's controversial thesis, representing only a small part of his work, might overshadow the remarkable contributions he has made to Hitler research.

The question of what sort of Hitler research is worthwhile is not one which it is easy to answer. It is, however, one very much worth asking. It is certainly true that Irving has a nose for documents, and is somehow able to afford the time and money for searching them out. But the question which troubles people in Germany, if nowhere else, is whether it is right to compose and publish – for publishers too must be responsible – books on Hitler which assume entirely Hitler's viewpoint? However interesting the documentation may appear, unless it is presented in conjunction with material from other viewpoints, what results is not history, but an exceptionally subtle, even insidious, form of propaganda.

The whole remarkable weekend closed with a showing of Syberberg's epic *Hitler, a Film from Germany*. Entirely unlike Joachim Fest's *Hitler, A Career*, which, again, and dangerously, shows Hitler from the Nazi's own perspective, Syberberg's film is a ruthless analysis of the social morality which made Hitler's brief success possible.

There has been some doubt in Syberberg's mind about whether this complex, difficult film can be shown generally in Germany. He now believes that it is possible.

One left Aschaffenburg with the feeling that at least in Germany, a counter attack against the sentimentalising of the Nazi past had begun.

Gitta Sereny is the author of Into That Darkness *(Picador), a study of Franz Stangl and his career as commandant of the Treblinka extermination camp.*

An Apology

The settlement of an action for libel brought by University College Cardiff, Professor Charles Magee and Professor Martin Albrow against the NEW STATESMAN was announced in the High Court on 4 July. The Court was told that in 1975, Professor Magee was Chairman and Professor Albrow was a member of the Part I Examining Board of the Faculty of Economic and Social Studies of University College Cardiff. One of the students who sat the examination was a Mr Stuart Barber. He failed the examination at his first attempt, and although, when he sat for it again a few month later, he passed, he has made frequent public statements claiming that he had been failed on the first occasion, not on merit but because of his political views and activities.

In an article 'A Degree of Failure' published in the NEW STATESMAN in October 1977, Mr Barber's allegations of academic dishonesty and political discrimination were given considerable prominence, and apparent support, and in November 1977 a letter from Mr Barber was published which, whilst resiling from the phrase "political victimisation" [illegible] his assertion of impropriety on the part of the 1975 examination board. He further ascribed this and other improprieties to University College Cardiff itself. It was stated on behalf of the Plaintiffs that there was no truth whatever in these highly defamatory assertions which Mr Barber himself unreservedly withdrew in February 1978.

Counsel for the NEW STATESMAN said that following publication of the article and letter complained of the NEW STATESMAN had published letters from Professor Albrow stating that Mr Barber's belief that he had been "politically victimised" was entirely without foundation. In March 1978, it was drawn to the NEW STATESMAN'S attention that Mr. Barber had withdrawn his allegation. Counsel confirmed that the NEW STATESMAN accepts that there was no truth whatever in the allegations of Stuart Barber, which are unreservedly withdrawn, and expressed sincere apology on behalf of the NEW STATESMAN to Professor Magee, Professor Albrow and to University College Cardiff for the publication of the article and subsequent letter. The NEW STATESMAN has indemnified the Plaintiffs in regard to their costs, the Plaintiffs having generously waived [illegible]

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London Diary

☐ Agitpropping is becoming highly vexatious. Only sheer annoyance at a police definition during the Martin Webster case of National Front supporters as 'dressed in combat jackets with trousers tucked inside their boots' drove me to it. Most people I know dress like that.

The first setback occurred in North Kensington. Founding members of the local branch of the Anti-Nazi League had just been turned away from the pub booked for their inaugural meeting. 'Allegedly, there was a double booking', the organiser explained to a restive audience finally herded a mile away into the community centre, 'but it could well have been something to do with the NF'. Over at Hackney, centre of the recent troubles, the NF had also been thrown out of their pub. 'A double booking', the chairman explained, 'but I expect it was the Anti-Nazi League putting pressure on.'

There were about 50 ANL supporters. Dress was mostly grubby ethnic, with just one combat jacket and three pairs of boots. It was fairly subdued, one of the few moments of excitement occurring when the chairman accused the NF of appealing to 'abysmally backward workers and criminals.' 'What', came a question from the floor, 'is wrong with criminals?' Answer came there none.

☐ At least the Hackney NF had managed to find another pub (only one camouflage jacket and a pair of boots among them). Helped by conspiratorially-locked doors and pints of ale, the atmosphere was somewhat livelier. 'We are being intimidated', said an eighteen-year-old grammar school boy. 'Our enemies understand the cosh and the club. I am not advocating violence, but when attacked, we shall defend ourselves.' (*cheers*) At this point I was politely thrown out.

Outside, against blocks of council flats with windows covered in corrugated iron, Brian White, head chef at Bethnal Green Hospital, kindly entertained me with his beliefs. 'I've nothing against blacks or Asians. I even like some of them as individuals, but it's the race, innit? If it was a natural thing you wouldn't need laws to enforce it. I'm not anti-Semitic; but Hackney Borough Council is run by them. You get the Mayor walking through the streets painting out racial *graffiti* – but he doesn't touch the Socialist Workers Party. They're causing the trouble – not us.'

Allowed back in, I was again asked to go. 'We don't want the Press here – you're biassed'. I refused to go; whereupon the complainant resigned his membership and, followed by three of his colleagues, stormed out. Ten seconds later he came back, hurling down torn-up copies of *Spearhead* (the NF magazine). Three minutes later he came back again for another drink and remained, muttering imprecations.

☐ '*Achtung, Achtung!*', read one of the ads in last week's *Exchange & Mart*. 'Just in from Germany, Hitler's birthday parade on cassette, £2.50.' The boom in Nazi memorabilia continues. Iron Crosses are practically two a *pfennig*, but there is no shortage of buyers for the more expensive items. A genuine SS tunic goes for about £150, an officer's presentation damascene sword for over £1,000. 'And as for Himmler's tunic, if it ever came up, I wouldn't like to put a price on it,' commented *Call to Arms*, one of the largest dealers. He saw nothing sinister in the craze for Nazi trophies. 'After all, it *was* over 30 years ago, and we get all sorts coming in here – not just kids, but Bob Hope and pop stars. We've even got rabbis interested in concentration camp stuff. Of course, there's not much of it left, but we do what we can in the way of striped pyjamas.'

☐ Ten years later, if anything could stir up bitterness over the Biafran War, it must surely be Sir David Hunt's review in the TLS of J. J. Stremlau's *The International Politics of the Nigerian Civil War*. British High Commissioner in Lagos at the time, Sir David is understandably *parti pris*. But, though true that the Federal victory did not lead, as was forecast, to massive reprisals, his argument that Ojukwu's accusations of genocide and starvation during the war were mere propaganda amounts to distortion.

A doctor friend of mine, working in Enugu General Hospital at the time, confirms the atrocities committed by Federal troops. She was at the receiving end when the wounded and dying were brought in after the Kano massacre – before the war even started. 'When a dying man told me that his pregnant wife had been ripped open, his daughter raped and murdered, why should I disbelieve him?'

From the other side, the ravings of Colonel Adekunle gave ample evidence of Federal intentions. He never denied the report quoting him: 'I want to prevent even one Ibo having even one piece to eat before their capitulation. We shoot at everything that moves, and when our forces march into the centre of Ibo territory, we shoot at everything, even things that do not move.' No wonder Ojukwu suspected genocide.

☐ One of the oddest records to come my way recently is *Commercial Break*. All right, Stuyvesant supports the LSO, and Player's help cricket; but this is ridiculous. Aimed at addicts of television commercials 'who suddenly become conscious that the background music is tantalisingly familiar', the eight tracks include Dvorak's *New World* (HOVIS); Grieg's *Peer Gynt* (NESCAFE); Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony* (BLUE BAND); and Orff's *Carmina Burana* (OLD SPICE). Difficult not to recall the famous occasion when a rather tired symphony orchestra, having played the *Pastoral*, returned after the interval to embark on *Carmina Burana*. 'Right,' said a first violin tetchily, 'We've buggered Beethoven, now let's fuck Orff.'

☐ It is, he claims, not tax that has driven James Galway out of Britain to live permanently in Switzerland, but the inadequacy of State support for music. Probably the most naturally gifted flautist in the world, certainly the best-known, he has no regrets about leaving the country. 'I had to slave my guts out in England. The establishment has never supported the arts in this country and it never will. So far as I'm concerned culture ends at Potter's Bar – and that's coming South. When did you ever see Maggie Thatcher in the front row at a concert?'

It was, he says, different in Germany, where for seven years he was principal flute with the Berlin Philharmonic. 'You didn't even have to ask for a rise – you got it automatically when the cost of living went up. We had a special train with VON KARAJAN written on the front and everyone saluted as we went by. The government here is not sufficiently proud of its orchestras to say "Look, here's a train, all pile in it and we'll take you to Scotland". I mean, can you imagine getting out after hours in a coach going somewhere really stupid and having to play *Heldenleben*. Musicians shouldn't have to live like that.'

☐ To considerable obloquy the NHS this week marked its 30 years of existence. Ironically, the Royal Free Hospital, whose luxurious new building in Hampstead is one of the Health Service's few undoubted triumphs, was celebrating its 150th.

Despite early setbacks – someone forgot to include a mortuary – the hospital has overcome local resistance to its being sited so near the Heath and the Georgian residences of Hampstead's wealthier inhabitants. Doctors sometimes complain about being unable to find their patients in the maze of small, open-plan wards; and to overcome the lack of privacy, they have had to develop a set of euphemisms when discussing cases with colleagues. 'Perhaps a transfer to the thirteenth floor' means, since the hospital has 12 floors, that the unfortunate patient is about to drop off the twig.

Patients themselves have few complaints – indeed, once having sampled the joys of life at the Royal Free, they come back for more. 'They're like recidivists', one nursing sister complained. 'Life's so much more comfortable here than it is outside, it's almost an argument for leaving hospitals as they were in the 1890s. It's only when we give them rotten drugs that they stop coming back.'

Ruth Hall

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard

☐ Although the pay of the Navy was not up to the task it performed, sailors did not want to be represented by a trade union, said Rear Admiral Morgan-Giles, MP for Winchester. 'Generally speaking they would rather starve,' he said. – *Portsmouth News* (Richard Ryan)

☐ Excellent homes needed for 2 lovely Afghan hound dogs. Must go together. Good tempered Dobermann dog, Cavalier King Charles bitch, Field Spaniel bitch, Irish Water Spaniel dog and bitch. References essential. – *The Times* (P Redwood)

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First Person

Arthur Marshall

Going Going Gone

Before I went up, almost exactly fifty years ago, to Cambridge to read modern languages, my kind and wise parents thought that it would be a more advantageous plan, and would mean a more agreeable three months for me, to remove me from my last summer term at school and send me abroad instead to French and German families, there to imbibe culture and improve my foreign lingo powers of conversation before facing what was hoped to be the intellectual challenge of the university, which turned out to be three supremely euphoric years of leisure, pleasure and almost total idleness. In those reprehensible days it was possible, provided you had been properly taught at school, to do virtually no work at all and I soon got the hang of this delightful new method of passing the time. Cambridge then had no fewer than five cinemas and scarcely a day came and went without finding me all teed up and expectant in a roomy *fauteuil* (a seat known to the lady in the box-office as 'footle'), a box of chocs to hand and agog for Clara Bow. Tut-tut, I know, and I don't regret a moment of it.

And so to Grenoble and Leipzig I happily went and, with other young men and girls, imbibed whatever culture was going. One of the cultural facets of French life was visits to art galleries and museums. Of the latter, so dreary were they, there seemed to be an over-sufficiency. Here and there, however, there were pleasurable moments not intended by the authorities. One particular museum concentrated entirely on the more ancient kind of antiquities and, as there were many British students about, obligingly provided English translations of the various descriptions of the artistic treasures on view. Thus it was that a rather chipped and armless Roman female bust, correctly described underneath in frog as *torse d'une jeune fille,* was presented to English visitors as MAID'S TRUNK.

As we all, of course, know, the French word for legacy or bequest is *le legs* and the museum was rightly keen to acknowledge its grateful thanks to its various benefactors of the past who had remembered it in their wills, one of whom had been a member of the ever generous and public-spirited Rothschild family. And so it befell that the lower section of a sort of mummified Egyptian body, two brown and wrinkled stumps somewhat lacking in charm but apparently of enormous importance, interest and value, was described to the public as *Legs de Mme Rothschild.*

I never found myself wishing to own any of these museum objects. I have almost every human failing that it is possible to possess and provide a deplorable picture of greed, sloth, pride and vanity but, by the merest fluke and by no virtue in me, envy is not one of them. As I step into my fourteen-year-old Cortina and zoom at 32 mph on a shopping expedition to Exeter, I am truly not envious of the Rolls and Bentleys and their owners who occasionally flash past me, possibly on their way to the beautifully sited (Dartmoor visible from most windows) and luxurious and not exactly cheap hotel at Moretonhampstead. It was originally the home of W.H. Smith and it is now, I understand, the property of British Rail and I really cannot imagine why, unless it be to provide restful and free holidays for exhausted engine drivers and other railway persons. This I somehow doubt, though I did once see Lord Beeching there, although he was really rather more of a non-railway person, when you come to think of it.

The quite extraordinary prices recently paid at Sotheby's for two small medieval enamels from the von Hirsch collection (both were knocked down, in the auctioneering sense, at over a million pounds and I suppose that it's now O.K. for any name with a 'von' in it to be so rich) have merely confirmed me in my lack of envy. I really and truly can rub along in life without the six inch Mosan enamel roundel depicting an angel symbolising, we are told, charity. I have not seen the angel in, so to speak, the flesh but the newspaper reproductions are enough to give one the general idea. I am never too sure of the gender of an angel, and here sweet charity has got an elongated and rather limp hard pressed to the chest in a manner which, if the chest is male, might cause in his parents some anxious thoughts. Its wings are folded back and look to me to be very far from airworthy. The expression of the face is gloomy to a degree and seems to suggest a severe, and I hope but passing, bilious attack. I gather that it cost this quite sickening sum because it is unique and one is unlikely to bump unexpectedly into another, a reason for rejoicing, I would have thought, in my Philistine way.

But what is this that I see reported? British Rail has been at it again (no wonder they can seemingly afford to spend so little time painting and cleaning their carriages, and improving and cheapening, financially, their food), saucily outbidding the British Museum, and really the nerve of it, with a price 'well within our estimates' and landing themselves and their pension fund with a large gilt bronze Romanesque candlestick with winged dragon feet. The price was just over half a million, roughly the equivalent of three million cups of railway tea. Those of us who like to help things along can feel, as we sip the healing beverage from the cardboard cup, that we are helping to provide, perhaps, Picassos for the Paddington waiting-rooms and can get a warm glow thus from two quarters.

I am, once again, truly not envious of possessors of expensive candlesticks of any description. Still less does one hanker after other *objets d'art* exposed at other famous sales. Mentmore's marquetry commodes, or whatever they were, can stay right there where they are. Sèvres porcelain, so precious and fragile that it can barely be breathed on, is not for me. Limoges illuminated manuscripts and reliquary caskets and Chinese porcelain goose tureens form no part of my dreams.

But what, you ask, of the interior of 'Myrtlebank'? Bare tables and floors? Not a chair in sight? Food from the tin? No pictures to refresh the eye? There are, indeed, no commodes of any kind. No fine tapestries (to me, almost the dullest of the world's artistic manifestations) grace the walls. I seem for the moment to have run out of illuminated manuscripts. There is, however, a painting by Constable, so perfect that its authenticity becomes at once suspect – white cottage, pond, haystack, cows, fields, trees, and clouds scudding across a blue sky. The fact that it is, although fairly small, signed by Constable is, apparently, the most suspicious fact of all. But intending burglars, reading this and planning to come by night, may care to know that my nearest neighbour has a large flock of geese, and neither Chinese nor porcelain ones. How good, I wonder, are burglars at classical history?

Roger Woddis: The Gospel according to Saint James

And it came to pass in the land of the faithful
That a lord bodied forth a commandment on pay:
'To them that are loaded shall more be given,
And from them that lack shall be taken away.'

And those that looked up and cried out for more wages
Were chastised with whips, that they worshipped false gods;
While judges and generals and all the exalted
Were comforted, yea, even over the odds.

Then there arose from the ranks of the lowly
A tumult of weeping and gnashing of teeth,
That God helpeth those in the seats of the mighty,
But God help the beggars that labour beneath.

And thus those that dreamed to inherit the kingdom
Were given short shrift and cast out of the door,
And heavy were hearts at the lordly commandment,
And heavy the mockers it put on phase four.

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Letters to the Editor

Labour and the Juntas

Sir, In 'Labour and the Juntas', (NS 16 June); you remind us that 'this country's name was made to stink in Latin America when the doors of the embassy in Santiago remained shut during the 1973 pogrom' and say that 'it would be a great pity if that mistake was repeated' in Argentina. The pity is that the mistake *has* been repeated. No-one found refuge in the embassy in Buenos Aires when Videla took over, and 27 months later Britain has granted entry clearance to fewer than ten Argentine political prisoners, of whom the first two have just arrived, having been detained without charge since 1975 in one case and mid-1976 in the other.

This situation hardly tallies with the Home Secretary's written statement last week that there has been 'no policy of delaying entry clearances for Argentines'. Mr Rees did say that in future he would 'exceptionally' consider applications from Argentines (and other Latin Americans) where 'ties with this country' can be proved, but this *ad hoc* arrangement falls well short of refugee schemes already introduced by seven European countries, the US and Canada; and is a pale shadow of the government's much praised programme of assistance to refugees from Chile.

It will be at least a year before we can test the effectiveness of this belated scheme, since the Home Office's checks on 'individual acceptability' are likely to take six months, and the Argentine authorities will take as long again to consider applications from prisoners wishing to go into exile (previously a constitutional right for those held without charges during a state of siege). With goodwill this period – an eternity to the prisoner – could be reduced to a matter of weeks. It is unfortunate, and in retrospect it will probably appear quite astonishing, that a Labour government should still be showing more goodwill to Videla (over arms sales, economic ties, the Falklands, and political co-operation in the South Atlantic) than to his victims.

RICHARD WHITECROSS
Secretary
Committee for Human Rights in Argentina
1 Cambridge Terrace
London NW1

The discordant music-makers

Sir, You can seldom have published as distorted a picture of any contentious matter as that by Patrick Wintour about the PRS and Trevor Lyttleton (NS 23 June). No innocent reader of this would have come within a mile of learning the following documented facts, all of which are relevant to a proper understanding of the dispute.

First, the most serious of the remarks by Lyttleton which led me to sue him for libel was that in the management of the PRS the requirements of the Companies Acts had been 'forgotten'.

Second, my decision to withdraw (with the unanimous agreement of the General Council) was taken not only in the light of the Trade Secretary's clear statement in Parliament that an investigation *under the Companies Acts* was not called for (my italics), but also of the facts (a) that Lyttleton's complaints had been overwhelmingly rejected at three recent meetings of members and (b) that the litigation later brought by Lyttleton *under the Companies Acts* (described by the Court of Appeal as 'misconceived from the outset') had failed.

Third, the court of Appeal's decision was not based on 'a simple reading of the PRS constitution' but solely on the interpretation of the Companies Acts. It did *not* rule that there was 'nothing to stop' the list from being released, but it did describe the Society's policy of keeping members' earnings confidential as 'not unreasonable', and Lyttleton's behaviour as 'ill advised'.

Fourth, Lyttleton's request for the voting list came in April 1977 (*not* the beginning of 1976) and he launched his litigation before the Council could even meet to consider it.

Fifth, prior to the 1977 AGM, voting list or no voting list, Lyttleton canvassed by letter, phone and visit many of the Society's most influential members; the Council willingly circulated two statements by him to all the voting members; and at the meeting special arrangements were made for non-voting members, including Lyttleton, to speak. After he had done so his resolution could not even find a seconder.

Sixth, Lyttleton's mail shot to members was said later by many to have misled them. The replies received by the Council were views on tentative proposals it had circulated and led to their amendment.

If its success in the Courts, the overwhelming support it has received from the membership and the clear statement by the Trade Secretary that an investigation 'is not called for' could have caused the Society's Council to 'lose its nerve', what on earth might happen I wonder if Lyttleton actually scored a success? The libel action was dropped so that we could all stop wasting time and get on with our proper job of earning a living for composers.

MICHAEL FREEGARD
Performing Rights Society
29/33 Berners Street W1

Patrick Wintour writes: One of Mr Freegard's difficulties in explaining his retreat from the courtroom is that he has a rather distorted vision of what is a documented fact. 1) His statement of claim does not make a single mention of the Companies Acts. 2) Mr Freegard explained his withdrawal from the libel on 14 April by stating 'in view of the Minister's answer the General Council and Mr Freegard are unanimously agreed that the libel action need not be continued' yet the Minister has now confirmed in writing that his decision not to investigate passed no comment on the libel issues. Mr Lyttleton, without the voting list, has never contested the three public meetings mentioned. Nor has Mr Freegard been vindicated by the courts. The appeal court noted that PRS did not have to release the voting list but that at all times it could have done so. Finally, if Mr Freegard is so keen to get lawyers out of his hair and get on with his proper job, then why have the PRS decided in the past fortnight to sue the *Daily Telegraph*?

Reverting to type

Sir, Although I wholeheartedly support Anna Coote's concern (NS 23 June) at the way girl students are 'syphoned off into separate and unequal jobs', I would ask her not just to take Harriet Harman's report into consideration but to speak to teachers too. She, like so many other people writing on the ills of our society, blames the teachers. Schools are *not* isolated from society and neither (contrary to popular myth) are the teachers who work in them. Has Ms Coote tried speaking to teachers of maths, metalwork, physics (biology seems to be more acceptable – perhaps because some girls see its relevance to having babies) who are utterly frustrated at the lack of response by girls to their subjects, however attractive and desirable they may try to make them?

A girl's self-image is made and controlled not by the schools alone, but by the media and her parents, who constantly appear to be telling her that all she requires in life is to be pretty, featherbrained, preferably de-odourized and able to cook. At a parents' evening not so long ago, I asked a father of a very bright pupil which university his daughter was applying to. 'University? She's going to be a secretary', came the reply, 'we don't want her to be too brainy, or she'll frighten off the boys. We don't want that do we?' I did *not* regard this as a rhetorical question: unfortunately, but not surprisingly, his daughter did.

EVA TUTCHELL
72 Holmesdale Road
Teddington

Redistribution

Sir, Pauline Jones' attack (Letters 30 June) on John Mortimer's statement that the divorce laws are 'a hotbed of sexual discrimination' is unfair and inaccurate. To demonstrate only the point in the last paragraph of her letter, let us consider the case of two women: one marries a wealthy man, one marries a poor man. Neither women takes any paid employment outside the home during the course of the marriage. Neither woman brings to the marriage any property, capital or income of any sort. Yet if both marriages fail, both husbands will be required to present their ex-wives with one-third of their capital and income plus one-third of the matrimonial home.

But if these women had sold their domestic services on the outside labour market then both would have been paid very similar rates of wages. Since their contribution to the marriage has been cooking, cleaning and child-care, the outside world would have paid them roughly the same sort of sum for similar work. Yet the ex-wife of the rich man will get very much more from her ex-husband than the ex-wife of the poor husband? Where is the justice or equality in this?

Of course wives contribute to a marriage, but some contribute in money as well as in moneys-worth. The one-third rule is extremely unfair both on men and on working wives. It favours the type of woman who is frequently simply lazy and idle and averse to the harsher world outside the home, and in my view ought to be abolished.

MARGARET HIGNETT
9 Park Mansions
South Lambeth Road SW8

On the Bloomsbury mantelpiece

Sir, Curiouser and curiouser! Anthony Powell tells us (NS 23 June) that Quentin Bell told him 'some years ago' that Gerald as well as George Duckworth interfered with the young Virginia Woolf, specifically mentioning 'the alleged improprieties on the mantelpiece'.

Quentin Bell's *Virginia Woolf* refers not only to Virginia but also to Leonard Woolf and others, all apparently implicating only George. He quotes Virginia's late letter to Ethel Smyth describing 'my half-brother . . . exploring my private parts', not on a mantelpiece but 'standing me on a ledge, aged about 6 or so'. The book was published in 1972, and has been reprinted in paperback on both sides of the Atlantic without alteration. Are we now to believe that both half-brothers were involved in this activity? Will Professor Bell explain which of his uncles did what to his aunt?

ARTHUR FREEMAN
84B Whitechapel High Street
London E1

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

Neal Ascherson

The Serendipity of War

The Russian War: 1941-1945 edited by Daniela Mrázková and Vladimír Remeš with an introduction by A. J. P. Taylor *Cape* £6.95

The Holocaust: Maps and Photographs by Martin Gilbert *Board of Deputies of British Jews* £2.50 and £1

The Russian Front: Germany's War in the East edited by James Dunnigan *Arms & Armour Press* £6.50

It is too easy to say that the war photographer is a war propagandist. Certainly the cameraman is subject to at least two levels of discipline. He mst produce the sort of material, stills or film, which his employers and those in charge of national propaganda consider useful to their struggle, whether they are trying to influence their own population or uncommitted audiences abroad. More intimately, he or she (because the Russians, in particular, had many women among their best and boldest photographers) will usually have internalised a notion of what the war is about, of how 'our soldiers' reveal themselves and their purpose most effectively.

But these disciplines can be enormously different in their severity. Helping to make television films about the second world war, and about the Soviet Union, I have been constantly astonished at the contrast between Soviet and Nazi material. Nazi film, especially, is highly structured; it says what it wants to say and nothing else, and to use it to illustrate some quite opposite interpretation of the events is very hard going. The Propaganda Ministry was confidently in charge, determined to ensure that pictures and film conveyed purpose and achievement. Stukas swoop, tanks roll, soldiers are grim but never bewildered in action. The dead sometimes appear, but in settings calculated to rouse anger rather than alarm.

A lot of the British material is similar: relentlessly upbeat, chirpy or determined. And one would naturally expect Soviet war photography and film to be just a militarised version of the massed tractors and deep-chested kolkhozniks. But much of it, astonishingly, is not like that at all. Some work is admittedly too good to be true, and has been re-enacted; I remember one film shot of charging tanks in which the camera suddenly soars 20 feet off the ground. But most of the material is not only believable but exceedingly free. The authorities don't seem to have prescribed closely what they wanted, as they did in both Germany and Britain. As a result, they got some film which they didn't like and held back, like the marvellous sequences of the Red Army in defeat, dating from 1941, which the Soviet Union released only a couple of years ago.

This degree of negative censorship, however, did not prevent the photographers from approaching the subject of war according to their own tastes – as individual artists. Their rivals with other armies produced pictures which now seem rather anonymous, belonging to a style or genre rather than to the person behind the camera. A first glance through this new book of war photographs begins to identify Trakhman or Shagin or Galina Sankova, as one can sense the signature of Capa or Donald McCullin. For comparison, I dug up *The War's Best Photographs*, brought out by Odhams in about 1943. There is some fine work in it, but the British pictures are curiously inhibited. Some are in the manner of advertising, some posed in the old Fleet Street way, many – in that so-British manner – concentrating on the pretty patterns of twisted airframes in the desert, spiral vapour-trails in the sky, the serendipity of war. Only a very few dare to raise the lens and look the human being straight in the face. This is what the Russian photographers in this book do all the time.

The Russian War is a selection of Soviet war photographs, produced by two Czechs a few years ago and now in a British edition with a brief introduction and linking texts by A. J. P. Taylor. In his introduction, Taylor tries to deal with this paradox and to explain why the official photographers of the most collectivist and reticent nation in the Alliance seem freer and more individual in their work than the cameramen of the Western democracies.

> For the Soviet cameramen, the war was everywhere. Their purpose was not to serve a distant public, but to assert the deep involvement of the Soviet people in the war. There was of course a propagandist purpose: to stress the unity of the Soviet people under suffering . . .

He adds, rightly, that these photographers had always seen themselves as artists. That was seldom true of the hard-working press photographers of the West, although some of them – and this has been true of many who more recently covered conflicts in the Middle East or Vietnam – discovered their real talents in war.

One would like to know a great deal more about these photographers, and their subjective feelings. Books like Philip Knightley's *The First Casualty* and Michael Herr's *Dispatches* have made us interested in the war correspondents' relationship to their subject, and aware of the guilt which many of them felt at the outward callousness of their job. The late Larry Burrows, shooting pictures of the dead and wounded coming off a helicopter in Vietnam and then exclaiming 'Sometimes one feels such a bastard!', personified them. Did Mikhail Trakhman feel a bastard as he photographed the partisans charging, one of them already down? Did Yakow Ryumkin feel bad when he recorded men going over the top in Stalingrad, and did Dmitri Baltermants and the others feel like intruders when they took picture after picture (these went round the world) of women seeking and finding their loved ones among the piled dead of the Kerch massacres? One can't know, but a sense of a common fate probably spared them much of that self-doubt. Did the ordinary soldiers under fire – the fellow-countrymen who are so contemptuously, so revealingly dismissed by Michael Herr in his Vietnam book as 'the grunts' – spit and mutter at the photographer when he had turned his back? Probably they did in Russia too.

Pictures like these are obviously better seen than described. They are set chronologically. They start with faces in Moscow at the declaration of war, then we have scenes of destruction and evacuation and retreat. At the end, there is Berlin in rubble, the red flag on the Reichstag, the prisoners huddled in blankets on the streets, the Russian soldiers dancing to the accordion. In between, the picture groups which impress most are Trakhman's with the partisans, Baltermants at Kerch, Kudoyarov in Leningrad, Uzlyan with the Black Sea marines. For myself, I would choose the small 'Artillery 1944' by Emmanujel Yevzerikhin, the perfect photograph.

In the last pages, the men and women who took these overwhelming pictures appear in portraits. Baltermants looks defenceless, and wears a small moustache. Khaldei is standing at the Brandenburg Gate and laughing, his cap on the back of his head. Sankova has a delicate, severe expression. Trakhman wrote afterwards that he had not got to grips with war, or shown its worst. Baltermants said: 'War is, above all, grief . . . war is not for photography. If, heaven forbid, I had to photograph war again, I would do it quite differently.'

The Holocaust is a very much shorter picture book, of another type altogether. Martin Gilbert has been for some time working on a 'comprehensive atlas' of the extermination of the European Jews by the Nazis. As he says in his introduction, the British Board of Deputies persuaded him to produce a foretaste, something slighter for use now. Here, in the shape of a small handbook, are some 20 pages of maps, faced by photographs. The maps show the location of the camps, the places in the world where Jews sought – and were denied – refuge, the routes of deportation and the sites of extermination for each major European community, the ghettoes and camps where Jews rose and fought. The pictures, unspeakable and in many cases unfamiliar, record what happened, often using Nazi film.

The neat little maps are deceptive, for their captions are written up with overflowing misery and rage. The intention of the text is to present information in a sort of part-cooked form, with violent emotion already worked into it. Mr Gilbert does not 'allow the cold facts to speak for themselves', apparently not willing to run the risk that a single reader might overlook their significance. So the captions and map annotations run: 'solely to gratify sadism . . . completely innocent civilians . . . deliberate brutality . . .' and so on. This leads to some imprecision: to mention (in a mere two lines) that the Nazis also 'massacred' two million Soviet prisoners of war and a million Soviet civilians does not pay much respect to the imposed starvation (not exactly massacre) which killed those prisoners off, nor to the diseases unleashed by want among the civilians.

It's not unfair to feel that this picture-book is designed for Jewish education, rather than for general reading. The 'Holocaust' title underlines this (the definition remains unclear to me: was the gassing of gypsies or the shooting of the Polish intellectuals not part of

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the 'Holocaust', or can one really draw racial distinctions in death?). But Mr Gilbert has taken pains to include material about the general European fate as well, and two pages record the extermination of gypsies and of 'non-Jewish victims' of Nazi rule – including the Germans themselves.

The Russian Front is a straightforward analysis of the war on the Eastern front, designed for military specialists and well-adorned with order-of-battle charts and technical maps. It includes, however, two excellent chapters on the organisation of Soviet and German ground forces, both written by James F. Dunnigan, which would be required reading for any general student of the war effort. Remarkable German omissions, like their failure fully to motorise the army (they were building only enough vehicles to replace losses even in 1942, and carried out a mass confiscation of civilian trucks only when it was too late), overcame their excellence in other respects. The system of 'elite' divisions degraded the quality of other units to the point that they fell apart in their first intense struggles.

Martin Walker

1985

The Third World War: A Future History by GENERAL SIR JOHN HACKETT AND OTHERS
Sidgwick & Jackson £7.95

Just over 100 years ago, an anonymous book was published under the title *The Battle of Dorking*. It was a realistic account of a Prussian invasion of England. Much was made of the inevitable civilian casualties and damage to property, as the undermanned and ill-equipped British Army was forced back by the ruthless invader. It caused a sensation at the time, and it played a major part in preparing the national (and military) climate for the drastic overhaul and reform of the British Army under Cardwell in the 1870s. The Army estimates rose by 20 per cent, 25 more battalions were created, the reserves were increased tenfold and the practice by which officers bought their commissions was ended.

For some months now there has been the odd hint from the British military establishment that a new *Battle of Dorking* was on its way; that the time was becoming ripe for a new Home Front propaganda offensive which would alert the British public to the growing threat of the Warsaw Pact, and persuade us to rearm. And for Sir John Hackett's popularised war game, the propaganda bombardment has been well prepared. The book has been serialised in the *Observer*; it is a Book of the Month Club choice; it has been selected by the Military Book Society. Sandhurst teems with copies.

The plot is simple. Alarmed by growing unrest in its Eastern European satellites, the USSR seeks a diplomatic-military victory over a new American President. Soviet and Cuban advisers lead black armies into South Africa; the pro-Soviet Egyptians take over the governments and the oil of Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. The brinkmanship gets out of hand with complications in Yugoslavia, the communists take over in Italy, and the Soviet tank armies crash through the German frontier and head for the Channel.

They are stopped. Just. An American 'air bridge' brings troops, and a military convoy takes 25-per-cent losses bringing their heavy equipment across the Atlantic. The French join the Nato forces, and the Russian drive through Holland is countered by a Nato counter-attack, driving north from Cologne. The Russians are thrown off balance, and the freedom-loving East Europeans begin to sabotage Soviet lines of communications. The whole Russian Empire collapses, after token nuclear attacks on Minsk and Birmingham, and the world settles down to live with De Gaulle's dream, an EEC which stretches from the Atlantic to the Urals. It makes for a rattling good yarn. Plucky British infantrymen delay the Soviet tank assaults with anti-tank guided missiles. Hard-fighting German reservists struggle against great odds to hold the line of the River Lippe. The long-haired Dutch conscripts crack under a chemical warfare attack. The RAF 'few' in their Tornados, man for man the best pilots in the war, launch tree-top attacks against the Soviet bases north of Murmansk.

The book has, though, a more serious purpose than futuristic narration. The war is being fought in 1985, and we are constantly assured that any earlier Soviet attack would have swept through Nato to victory: 'A surprise attack in the late 70s by in-place forces of the Warsaw Pact would have found Allied Command Europe so ill-prepared that its early success could hardly have been in doubt.' But the miracle has happened. Public opinion, from about 1978 onwards, has forced the West's politicians to rearm. The US has reintroduced conscription. Britain has overhauled its reserve forces, and given a second Army corps to Nato.

> There had been a marked all-round improvement in Nato tactical air strength in the previous few years . . . By 1985 the Tornado intereceptors were in service in considerable numbers, thanks to increased production and round-the-clock working by all the contractors . . . The escort carriers, frigates, patrol ships, helicopters and maritime aircraft had been built, as a matter of great urgency, during the period 1979-85 . . . The British naval contribution to Nato had been augmented, during the period 1979-85, following a sudden 11th-hour awakening of public opinion to Britain's extreme vulnerability to attack upon her seaborne trade and supplies.

So – as well as a second Army corps for Nato, a new air defence and radar system, protected and hardened airfields – Britain builds in the period three escort carriers, equipped with Sea Harriers, anti-submarine helicopters and strike aircraft, four new frigates, 12 corvettes, six mine countermeasures vessels and five more submarines. Sir John Hackett touches briefly on the extra jobs this rearmament programme creates, and adds, 'It seems a preferable alternative to building merchant ships, at a loss, for Soviet satellite countries, to be employed in cut-throat competition against the merchant fleets of the UK.' This is the essence of the book. The fighting, the battles in Germany, are almost overwhelmed by the political changes which Sir John predicates in the vital pre-war years. How does this political balance change?

> The massive burden of British trade unionism began to prove unwelcome to the working people who had to bear it . . . Up to the mid-70s public opinion in Britain was not yet sufficiently aware of the menace from union power to face the discomforts of standing up to it . . . A total addiction to redistributive economic and fiscal policies, which showed itself in hostility o profit-making and in penal taxation on industrial enterprise, was gradually being replaced by more sensible attitudes, which at last permitted an increase in national wealth . . . Independent schools were once more allowed to flourish, as so many parents wished . . . In universities, it began to be quite fashionable once more to join the Officer Training Corps.

Just in case Sir John's readers do not quite get the message, page 79 spells it out plainly: 'The return to comparative prosperity and a Conservative government.' And on page 109, the last veil is flicked aside. The British Premier of that Conservative government is a Mrs Plumber (*sic*). Britain's renewed commitment to Nato comes clad in the corsets of the Iron Maiden.

In Britain, a key event in the reviving patriotism is the formation in 1979 of the National Emergency Volunteers – 'a voluntary, self-financing organisation . . . to encourage parishes and urban communities to plan and organise as survival units in an emergency'. They are given government backing and funds in 1983. In 1974, when one of Sir John Hackett's former colleagues, General Sir Walter Walker, formed his own band of emergency volunteers, it was widely seen as a vaguely sinister eccentricity. Sir John Hackett is too eminent a scholar to be so easily dismissed, even if his military reputation has never quite recovered from his performance at Arnhem, when his petulance at being commanded by the technically junior Brigadier Hicks raised the eyebrows and the hackles of his colleagues.

The speeches of Mrs Thatcher, the tone and topics of British, French, German and US defence magazines, the growing British defence budget and the decisions taken at the seminal Nato conference this spring all suggest that Sir John Hackett's book and views are being buoyed on a rising tide. That tide is rising, to no small degree, because the liberal Left in Europe (which tends to be quite as anti-Soviet as Sir John and his kind) *still* lacks any sense of what a coherent defence strategy should be. The progress of the Yugoslavs (let alone the Swedes and Swiss) in building a potential democracy-in-arms has passed largely unremarked. Sir John is right to say that the British forces are ill-equipped, badly-supplied and under-reserved for a land war in Europe. But his remedies are not the only ones – even if we assent to his vision of the great tank clash on the North German plain.

And thoughtful militarists who share Sir John's political views will doubtless think twice about some of his tactics. It is a commonplace in defence circles to claim, as Sir John does, that the Soviet system is too hidebound to produce junior and regimental officers with enough initiative to match the

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free spirits of the West. It is becoming commonplace to join him in arguing that the West's lead in electronic and microchip systems gives Nato a vital technological edge. But his suggestion that only 11 Soviet submarines would be available to engage the vital Atlantic convoy is dubious, in view of the 162 attack submarines (40 of them nuclear) which the USSR possessed in 1977. He casts doubt on Soviet mounted infantry tactics, even though their BMPs are widely acknowledged to be the best Mechanised Infantry Combat Vehicles in the world.

Sir John and his helpers (a galaxy of senior British and American Nato officers and diplomats) have produced an important and deliberately alarmist book. They have been badly let down by the sloppiness of their publishers: Baltic Exits become Baltic Exists (p174); maps are given incorrect page numbers in the Contents; page references are wrong; there are no maps of the key naval operations in the NORLANT zone. They have also worn their political hearts on their sleeves – and the hearts consequently tend to rule their heads. Most of all, they seem to have forgotten that the reformed British Army produced by the *Battle of Dorking* 100 years ago was the very army which was shot to bloody ruin by the Boers.

Richard Cobb

Le Problème du Midi

The Albigensian Crusade by JONATHAN SUMPTION *Faber* £7.95

The ceiling and the walls of the *Grande Salle du Conseil* of the *Capitole*, the town-hall of Toulouse, are decorated with some of the most hideous late-19th-century murals to be seen in any public building in France (the old Sorbonne included). The ceiling is the reserve of dark-haired and cherry-lipped female nudes – *de plantureuses Toulousaines* – in various attitudes of langourous repose. But there is a great deal going on on the walls: sieges, sackings, burnings, State entries in litters, banners, cloth of gold, processions, stakes, and a vast battle piece, commented in Gothic letters of red and gold: *Simon de Montfort est mort, Eviva Tolosa,* a message which, despite its linguistic improbability, seemed to me both suitably patriotic and announcing very good news (I had in fact got the wrong Simon de Montfort, confusing the son with the father – excusable, perhaps, as they were both awful – and had no idea what the northern adventurer from Montfort-l'Amaury could have been doing right down here). Jonathan Sumption's lucid, intelligent, and attractive book provides the necessary historical background to the destruction of the principality of Toulouse between 1208 and 1229, under its last two Counts, Raymond VI and Raymond VII, and its inclusion, in name at least, in the kingdom of France already at this early date, as a result of the Albigensian Crusade, launched from the north, and rather begrudgingly supported by Louis IX. But the book is also an indispensable introduction to the long-term particularisms of both the South-West and the South-East, which emerge, in the late 18th century, and persist, at least in the Gard, till about 1852, in the form of what appeared to a succession of bewildered and disgusted northerners as *le problème du Midi,* something that the locals saw, not as a problem, but as an injustice, imposed by and from Paris, and which has been revived, much more recently, and very foggily, as the discovery of the never-never land called *l'Occitanie.*

The author begins with an impressive geographical survey of a region extending from Provence and the Rhône Valley – the Counts of Toulouse preferred Beaucaire to Toulouse – to the comté de Foix and the Pyrenees. Already, in the 13th century, the singular good fortune of the South-West consisted in its inaccessibility from Paris (though not from the kingdom of England bordering on the Agenais); and he insists on the consequent importance of the Saône-Rhône corridor as the only natural link between the Ile-de-France and the Mediterranean, between Paris and the city state of Marseille: a route taken, first of all by dioceses spreading upwards (from Vienne and Lyon), by heresy spreading downwards (Cathars and Waldensians), by the subsequent Crusade, downwards (assembling in Lyon in June 1209), and, in the 16th century, by Protestantism, in both directions. By a historical irony, at the end of the 18th century the same route, at least from the level of Chalon to that of Marseille, was to form the backbone of the *royaume du Midi,* of the activities of the anti-Parisian murder gangs, and of a vast area of rejection of the State.

Sumption goes on to illustrate the peculiarity of the 13th-century principality of Toulouse: it had no feudal armies, few feudal bonds, in the absence of fiefs, a relatively easy escape from serfdom, a total dependence on mercenaries, a rash of small castles, an urban society, on the Italian model, in which even the nobility, great and small, was town-based. In cultural terms, in the heyday of the troubadours, it was also a society dominated by women, and of relative sexual permissiveness. Raymond VI, who was said to have committed incest with his sister, seems to have applied some of the doctrines of Catharism with a touching literalness.

Although both heresies – Catharism and the Waldensians – originally penetrated the South-West from the north (and from Lombardy), the former found its most favourable and persistent terrain among the small nobility of Lombers, Laurac, Fanjeaux, Lavaux, Lautrec, Verfeil, Montréal, Saverdun, Pamiers – tiny, fortified places, with populations of little more than one or two thousand – though, for a time, it also gained access to Béziers and Montpellier, and even to the new and wealthier quarter of Toulouse itself, the *bourg*, as opposed to the fiercely Catholic *cité.* Just before the Crusade, the author reckons that a third of the nobility of the principality were in open or covert support of the Perfects. The South-West also contained well-established Jewish communities, much favoured by the Counts, and possessing Talmudic schools in Narbonne, Lunel and Beaucaire.

The eventual success of the Crusade was not entirely disastrous to what had hitherto been the principality of Counts Raymond VI and VII. Catharism, it is true, had been entirely extirpated, with appalling cruelty, by 1321, with the burning of Bélibaste, the only personality to figure both in the present book and in *Montaillou.* But many Cathar attitudes certainly survived in the mountainous communities, even after the revered hermits had been brought to the stake by the Inquisition. The South-West, however, was not colonised by greedy northern knights and barons, and, with the exception of the princely families, the local nobility survived, at the cost of recantation and readmission to the fold. Indeed, thanks to the Avignon papacy, the higher ranks of a triumphant church were soon monopolised by southerners, at the minimal cost of learning French (just as, following the construction of the railways, the South-West was to invade Parisian politics, the Bar, the bureaucracy, the teaching profession, and the police). Urban institutions, as strong here as in Flanders, also survived, and the majority of the inhabitants continued to speak a variety of Provençal. Louis IX did not seek to destroy Languedoc, which thus remained a privileged area right up to the Revolution; and, as a result of the Revolution, it was the South-East, rather than the South-West, that, in bitter deprivation, would reject the new régime out of hand. Although the 16th-century map of Protestantism often overlays, like a grid, that of 13th-century Catharism,

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the author sees no connection between the two, over this gulf of three centuries, though he allows for some link between the austerity of the Waldensians and that of the Calvinists. There might be a further link that would be worth investigating: that between the extirpation of Catharism, a popular religion, and the early emergence of de-Christianisation, especially in Provence and in parts of the Minervois. But that is to look far beyond the limited period the author has assigned himself.

This is a valuable and elegantly written introduction to what has often seemed a highly mysterious subject. Jonathan Sumption has disposed of the many myths that have so doggedly surrounded the vague memory of the Perfects, and he has provided a coherent and agreeable narrative to guide the newcomer, in the wake of the Crusaders, to the land of the *troubadours*. One cannot but regret their disappearance, with that of the highly sophisticated Counts of Toulouse. But it might have been worse, was indeed to be much worse during the terrible *chevauchees* of the Hundred Years' War. To a modern historian, this excellent book will also offer many suggestive parallels on the subject of Southern particularism. And, if the Counts of Toulouse went under, their last surviving ancestor, Toulouse-Lautrec, moved in the opposite direction to that taken by the Crusaders, *à la conquete de Paris*, a one-man and multi-woman operation carried out with singular panache.

Tom Paulin

The Mirror and the Mirror

Shandyism: The Character of Romantic Irony by PETER CONRAD *Blackwell* £9.50

As a literary critic Peter Conrad resembles a combination of Rameau's nephew and Dostoevsky's underground man. He is an astringent dandy, a bitter and obsessive virtuoso, a fluent barrister who believes he is a judge. His study of 'romantic irony' – a playful term like, say, 'the 18th-century railway' – is a curious kettle of sprats. All sorts of little ideas flicker and leap about and disappear, for this is not a book of literary criticism, nor even a long essay, but a review which has been stretched to breaking-point, like an elastic band. His ostensible subject is Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, that highly facetious novel which becomes a capacious holdall into which Conrad slings Hamlet, Falstaff, Hogarth, Fuseli, and anyone else he cares to mention.

The licence for this studied randomness lies in Hamlet's wish to be 'bounded in a nut-shell, and count myself king of infinite space' – a wish that runs like a refrain throughout Conrad's volume and which is touched on in the remark that Tristram's Uncle Toby is 'trapped inside his own head'. This insight is both casual and calculated, a glancing irony that is the centre and periphery of Conrad's pseudo-argument (like Hamlet's immense [illegible]). It is ironic because irony, in Conrad's definition of the term, is 'self-referring', and we would be misreading *Shandyism* if we failed to notice just how carefully it holds a mirror to its author.

Out of several self-referring statements, this is my favourite:

> *Tristram Shandy* reveals the virtuoso's cabinet to be a memory-theatre, a claustrophobic and subterranean library stack where recollections are stored and where wisdom collects dust in the form of alphabets, emblems and antique devices. For all its digressive proliferations, it is a narrow space tightly packed, a mind indexed and catalogued, a prison of mnemonic systems – the 20 knots, Toby's maps and treatises of military architecture, the hobby-horses.

Though this is as near as Conrad ever gets to a text, it isn't simply a statement about Sterne's novel. We are meant to recognise in it the voice of the underground scholar, a lost soul who wanders from shelf to shelf in the dusty vaults of the Bodleian library and dreams of being released into the light outside. There is a hectoring anguish, a desperate pride, in the way Conrad writes. He presents himself as being what Henry James terms a 'fixed constituent', and his digressive virtuosity can be seen as an attempt to escape from the narrow nut-shell to which he returns again and again in order to prove whatever point he happens to be chasing. Throughout his tightly written but loosely argued pages he casts himself as a kind of operatic fossil playing games that are endlessly 'self-delighting' and 'self-referring'. And it is to these games, rather than to any work of art, that this string of adjectives refers: 'exclusively perfect, self-contained, beautifully vacuous'.

The trouble is that once you start playing games with self-reflecting mirrors there's no stopping. Romantic poetry is at last pinned down as being 'about a style which is entirely self-referring', Falstaff and Hamlet are shown to be 'secretly alike', and everything is like everything else. In this glassy desert of pure form the 'psychological problems' of Hamlet and Othello are really 'the aesthetic problems of their creator camouflaged', and Clarissa gets raped by a book – she is 'the tragic victim of her fiction'. Here, Conrad is gleeful at the 'defiantly absurd' results of his critical libertinism, and in this he identifies with Lovelace – another self-delighting and ironic libertine who hungers to possess an idea and destroys it in doing so. This is because Lovelace – out of all the roles that Conrad plays – is the figure that is closest to his critical identity (as if, behind the shimmer of protean shapes, there might be a central principle). But Lovelace is a man of masks and all we can really say of him is that he is a witty materialist, the enemy of the free spirit. And this is essentially Conrad's critical procedure – he loves to pin something down and extinguish it.

This ruthless separation of form from content makes every work of art look like some eerie Möbius strip, and as a result Conrad transforms himself into a critical acrobat who leaps and rolls through a single dimension. By changing feeling into 'performance', by refusing to 'condescend to a meaning', this type of criticism pushes itself violently towards the furthest extremes of punitive introversion. In that minuscule vacuum, Conrad becomes the emperor of tight waffle who informs us that Shakespeare is 'subjective in his studied objectivity, omnipresent in his enigmatic absence'. Or, soliloquising in a nut-shell, he explains that the architecture of Fonthill is a folly, but an expression as well of an over-reaching *folie* like Faust's, a monument to aspiring discontent and dreamy immensity'. But this subterranean folly could be anyone else's – say that of the under-privileged clerk in Davidson's *Thirty Bob A Week*. And all these dreamy immensities, cloudy nothings, capricious involutions, expansive nut-shells, are just fixed items on a limitless list. No one (least of all Mr Conrad) is going to be fooled by them or by those 'feats of preposterous intellect' which is all he has to say about Donne's poetry. Because that phrase – like any and every phrase in *Shandyism* – exists only as an invitation to admire the tight and proliferating surfaces he is skimming over. Reading through this book is like watching a solitary ice-skater – you feel you are intruding on a private and exquisite delight, an absorbed and pointless performance, a slithering arabesque.

Morris Fraser

Starting Early

The Young Drinkers by JOYCE O'CONNOR *Tavistock* £14.25

Children with Emerald Eyes by MIRA ROTHENBERG *Souvenir Press* £5 & £2.95

The alcohol intake of young Europeans has been rising steadily for the last two decades, and in the same period the number of drink-related offences among young people has doubled. Their offspring show an alarming incidence of anxiety symptoms and child drunkenness, together with delays in teething, physical development and learning ability. A wide-ranging inquiry into the origin and natural history of alcohol dependence in young people is badly needed; disappointingly, Joyce O'Connor's title suggests a much broader area of research than the actual scope of her study would seem to warrant. Still, within its limits it is a meticulous and outstandingly well-managed project; the writing is masterly and the study's structure and conclusions are in general set out clearly and with precision. A keen eye for untested assumptions led the author to challenge received images of the Irishman at home and abroad as an irremediable boozer. The subjects of her four-year research plan were some 800 young people aged between 18 and 21 and their parents; there were three groups — Irish, English and Anglo-Irish, the last group being youngsters whose parents were Irish, but who had themselves been born and reared in England. She and her team embarked on a detailed analysis of their drinking habits and attitudes, the social and parental rules governing their drinking, and its relation to their stability within their work, their religion and their culture.

Placed, uneasily, between a description of the study's design and its results are parallel accounts of social drinking and the temperance movements in Ireland and England. Even leaving the Irish aside, few indeed of the peoples who settled in England were noted for their sobriety. The Romans built the first taverns, with a common drinking glass chained to a post, but I like to think that the equivalent of a Design Centre Award went to

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the Anglo-Saxon who devised drinking cups 'so made that they could not stand upright, each guest being compelled to drink the glass off at one draught'. England was 'that dizzy iland', a Royalist preacher complained, whose inhabitants drank as if they were 'nothing but sponges to soak up moisture'. The legacy was a widespread acceptance of social drinking; the English temperance movement was diversified and failed to involve the institutional church and country as a whole. By contrast, the movement in Ireland was deeply embedded in Catholicism, linking religion, patriotism and sacrifice.

It is this tug between two very different sets of cultural ideals that is held to account for the finding that Irish young people reared in England were indeed the most exposed in terms of alcohol intake and drink-related problems. So, in a way, the traditional archetype fails to be toppled. But the mere fact of being a minority group is not a sufficient explanation for heavy drinking among the Anglo-Irish; alcoholism is rare among West Indians and almost unknown among Jews. Anglo-Irish subjects frequently said that they drank in order to dispel anxiety and this, says the author, arises from the Irish 'ambivalence' to drinking, and the failure of these young people to absorb either of two sets of cultural restraints. There could perhaps be more attention to stresses other than the mere ambivalence of attitudes to drinking. The Irish in England are indeed a group apart, yet they are not *sufficiently* different from the host population (as are West Indians) to gain any compensating sense of identity or cohesion and hence, it appears to me, the need for extra alcoholic, religious and pharmacological cushions against the anxieties of their disaffiliation.

As an example of a circumscribed demographic study Joyce O'Connor's book is incomparable, but I hope that her highly skilled team will not be content with investigating 'normal' drinking patterns alone. Certainly the incidence of 'problem' drinking was very low – but if drinking is not to be viewed as a problem, or at least a potential problem, there is little point in studying the subject at all. It is not enough to conceive of 'heavy-type' drinking purely in terms of intake per given time; the logical next step would be an examination of the youngsters whose drinking led them into legal, professional or social difficulties; what additional factors operated to make this group, among all the rest, vulnerable? Sadly this question is not answered, or even asked. One also has to say that this book of modest size is amazingly expensive.

Mira Rothenberg's work is similar only in its depressing imbalance between Herculean efforts and extremely modest rewards. The author is a clinical psychologist and director of the Blueberry Treatment Centers in New York; in the book she describes her work with some of the deeply alienated children there, most of whom would be diagnosed in England as autistic. Infantile autism is still as much of an enigma as schizophrenia, but the most favoured explanation is that the autistic child suffers from a central, perhaps only slight, defect in the organisation of language, overlaid by a vast system of psychological defences. In the first years the young child fails to make adequate meaning of simple words and sentences; his parents' faces, instead of showing love and acceptance, tend to reflect growing puzzlement, frustration and impatience. The outcome is almost predictable; notably, a consistent feature of the autistic syndrome is a studied avoidance of eye contact with adults. But more than this, these children, with their inability or refusal to make normal human contacts and their destructive rage, are about the most difficult group with which a psychiatrist has to deal. Time, love and adrenalin are the staple ingredients of psychotherapy, and Dr Rothenberg is unsparing of all three; each of the ten case-studies vividly records her efforts to reach out and contact each child through both his deep bewilderment and anger and her own. The pace is unflagging and breathless, at times breaking into a kind of raw psalmody; but there is no gobbledygook, and her interpretations, right or wrong, cannot fail to involve the reader:

> Perhaps there are children who have incorporated into themselves the absolute need to be dead. For whom the need, command, to be dead, as ordered by their parents, has invaded so great a part of their personality that no matter how much nursing, how much nurturing we give them, this need, this order, this command, defeats us.
>
> Anthony was a child who lost his Eden too early, but never gave up. At the portals of his babyhood he stood and longingly tried to catch glimpses of his lost paradise. But all he managed to catch hold of was the inability to control his bowels.

Many of the chapters end with comparative failure, but most of the case-histories are deeply moving and all are unforgettable. If there is any general theme, it is that 'understanding' has little to do with technicalities and analysis. Paramount to their more specialised needs are those which such youngsters share with every other child, gifted or deprived. The need, in the author's words, to have love, to have contact – not to be alone.

This English

There is a common syntactical slip (very like a dangler) which we shall call, for convenience, the roving apposition: it has something to do with bunging information into a sentence at the wrong moment, as the author abruptly realises he is in danger of leaving the information out. Three of these (and note the absent query in number two), and a salacious lay/lie.

☐ *The Sexual Outlaw* was about to be published when his letter was received in a printing order of about 4,500. **Nicholas de Jongh** *Guardian* (David Edwards)

☐ Referring to the beatings of the two Britons for breaking the law in Saudi Arabia, may I, as a side issue to Middle East morality, mention that in eight years afloat in that area I never had occasion to close or lock my cabin door, and no one ever stole a single thing. **W. A. C. Harvey** *Daily Telegraph* (Cicely Wright)

☐ . . . many parish priests reportedly disobeyed their bishops last Sunday, and did not read the 'new ten commandments' against abortions from the pulpit. **George Armstrong** *Guardian* (Bill Jeffrey)

☐ The city now looks like two cities, the outer rings looking almost festive with people laying in open spaces off the road under hastily thrown up shelters of blankets and carpets, in tents or merely on camp beds behind cars. **George Coats** *Guardian* (P. J. Walker)

Leonard Schapiro

Impernichol

Nicholas I, Emperor and Autocrat of All the Russias by W. BRUCE LINCOLN *Allen Lane* £10

Strange as it may seem, this is the first biography of Nicholas I to be written in English – though there exists one translation of a fairly mediocre work from the French, and one of an early Soviet study. Strange, because for a time Nicholas haunted the minds of our statesmen as the bogey-in-chief. When he died, in 1855, in the course of the Crimean war, Herzen had no difficulty in bribing the London street urchins to shout, 'Hurrah! Impernichol dead!'. Herzen's motives were not, of course, those of British imperialism. Living in exile from Russia, he was among the leading foes of Nicholas I. It was indeed mainly Herzen, as well as the radicals of the next reign, who set the tone for the traditional assessment of that monarch as a monster of bigoted tyranny.

It was because Nicholas is so often seen only through the eyes of the radical intelligentsia that Professor Lincoln was impelled to write this life of the 'gendarme of Europe' with the intention of trying to see him in the perspective of his time and in the light of the problems which faced him. No one could be better qualified for the task. Professor Lincoln has already an established reputation as the author of numerous important studies of the Russian bureaucracy of the 19th century. He has worked in the relevant unpublished archives and writes a crisp, readable prose.

Though a necessary corrective to the popular view, his study is very far from being a panegyric. Nicholas still remains limited and unimaginative, not very intelligent, redeemed by an upright character, courage, and, above all, an overwhelming sense of duty. Queen Victoria, who met him when he visited London in 1844, described him in a letter to King Leopold:

> He is stern and severe – with fixed principles of *duty* which *nothing* on earth will make him change; very clever I do *not* think him, and his mind is an uncivilised one; his education has been neglected; politics and military concerns are the only things he takes great interest in; the arts and all softer occupations he is insensible to, but he is sincere, I am certain, *sincere* even in his most despotic acts, from a sense that that *is* the *only* way to govern.

(She would have added, had she known about it, his contempt for the non-Russian subjects of his empire, such as Jews and Tartars.)

Dr Lincoln's portrait fills out the Queen's sketch, but does not substantially alter its main lines. Yet he is much too good an historian of Russia to leave the impression that the iniquities of Nicholas's 30-year reign were to be laid solely at his door. There is no doubt, for example, that in preserving Russia from revolution, and other, less frightening, importations from the West, as well as in creating an imposing military machine for preserving order in Europe, Nicholas had the support of a very large majority of his subjects. Even Turgenev, whom no one would suspect of admiration for any autocrat, and

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who spent a month in prison and over a year in exile on Nicholas's express orders for publishing an obituary of Gogol, was no exception: on the eve of the Russian declaration of war on France and Great Britain, he wrote to Pauline Viardot that 'over 65 millions are as one, at this moment . . . behind the government' and compared the situation to that of 1812. Even Pushkin, whose works were censored personally by Nicholas and who may have suspected the Emperor (unjustly) of having had an affair with his wife Natalie, never lost his admiration for the autocrat.

It is the great merit of Lincoln's book that it tries to see Nicholas as the product of his education, his advisers, indeed of his personal life. He assigns due importance to the ill-planned, ill-conceived and ill-executed Decembrist rising which, on 14 December 1825, inaugurated the reign ('Voilà un joli commencement du règne!' was the Emperor's reported comment). One effect of it was to perpetuate Nicholas's natural suspicion and dislike of all intellectuals – and the Decembrists were intellectuals in uniform. But the detailed investigation into the revolt, which he supervised meticulously, also provided him, in the shape of the extensive depositions of the accused, with a vivid picture of the many ills which beset Russian society. Throughout his life Nicholas, no doubt quite sincerely, devoted much effort to trying to see what Russia was really like: he was constantly defeated by the prevarications of his officials and by the bureaucratic wall which separated him from any real contact with the life of the country. The shock of the revolutionary year 1848 set the seal on any hopes of reform that might still have lingered: censorship reached new depths of absurdity; and all talk of reforming serfdom came to an abrupt end for fear of antagonising the landowners on whose co-operation public order depended.

That shrewd and far from revolutionary observer, the censor and scholar Nikitenko, recorded in his diary when Nicholas died that the main shortcoming of the reign had been the fact that 'it was all a mistake'. He meant, no doubt, the lies and the sham behind the façade – the idle and corrupt bureaucracy, and the enormous army which sacrificed efficiency to parade-ground glamour. As a contemporary wrote, in the form of ironical advice to a would-be civil servant:

> . . . never admit your guilt, but write your explanation in as long and as confused a manner as possible. No one will read it, but seeing you have written a great deal, they will consider you to be right . . . Always say you are busy, but do not tell anyone what your work deals with . . . That way people will think that you are occupied continually with important state affairs.

The débâcle of the Crimean War was the price which Russia paid for her failure to modernise an economic system based on serfdom, primitive transport and mainly agricultural exports.

It used to be fashionable to draw a parallel between the Russia of Nicholas I and the present day. Universal corruption, illegality, a swollen officialdom, ludicrous censorship and ubiquitous police – it is easy to see why. But the similarities must not be stressed too much. For all the fears of Palmerston and others, Nicholas had no expansionist ambitions – his foreign policy was basically defensive in intention, whatever impression he might have conveyed, and his much-vaunted army was a paper tiger. Censorship or no, the glories of Russian literature unfolded in the first half of the 19th century – Pushkin and Lermontov, Gogol, who revolutionised both the novel and the theatre, the young Dostoevsky and Turgenev, were all its products. The Soviet period has its brilliant stars too — Akhmatova, Pasternak, Mandelstam, Solzhenitsyn. But much of their work has had to appear clandestinely or abroad. The universal prevalence of the lie, which has largely destroyed written language as a means of free communication of ideas in the official Russia of today, had evidently not yet made such inroads in the reign of Nicholas I.

Hilary Spurling

This Hammer

The Victim as Criminal and Artist: Literature from the American Prison by H. BRUCE FRANKLIN *Oxford* £7.95

H. Bruce Franklin has spent seven years exploring the prose and poetry produced by American slaves and convicts (which generally means blacks), and now comes back with an appalling report on the behaviour of all concerned, not least the literary establishment, which has compounded the ancestral wrongs done to the American negro by contriving over a century and more to ignore virtually every word he wrote. Professor Franklin is at his liveliest and most persuasive in his discouraging portrait of American academe with its timidity, conformity, triviality, its hiring and firing, its ceaseless jockeying for position, above all its complacent preference for the white or 'genteel' tradition headed by Nathaniel Hawthorne and including apparently almost every writer subsequently known to fame.

Franklin's rival team is by definition unfamiliar, save for Malcolm X, and a handful of honorary blacks like Hermann Melville, Jack London and Robert E. (*I Am a Fugitive from a Georgia Chain Gang!*) Burns. Its stars range from runaway slaves like Linda Brent and Frederick Douglass (whose critical and bibliographical neglect, in a country so heavily addicted to these pastimes, does indeed seem scandalous) to the Attica prison poets of the 1960s. But one of Franklin's main points is that the greater part of Afro-American literature comes from the collective rather than individual consciousness; and he has a fascinating section on the work songs which were essential to survival among cotton pickers on the slave plantations, or the convict gangs that built America's roads and railways with pick, shovel and hand-drill in the 1920s.

Labourers shackled together, working 15 hours a day, 16 licks (or, so far as I can make out, strokes of the pickaxe) a minute, needed a steady rhythmic beat simply in order to get through each stint without collapsing; often enough the nearest things they had to personal possessions were the songs which expressed with such laconic ingenuity their ancient, almost infinite varieties of misery. Laments like Penal Farm Blues, Lectric Chair Blues, Shelby County Workhouse Blues, Mississippi Jail House Groan extended a repertoire first laid down under slavery; steadily expanded under the system of contract labour (whereby the ex-slave freely promised to work under armed guards and foot the expenses of recapture supposing he ran away) and widespread debt peonage which succeeded it; recently refined during the poetic upheaval started by the prison riots of 1964-68.

But one can't help feeling that an approach which excludes music does scant justice to the emotional or formal sophistication of the blues tradition. From a literary point of view there is a great deal more to be said for the marvellously rich and strange 19th-century slave narratives: autobiographies written by people who were reliably believed to be – who often began by believing themselves to be –

Charles Tomlinson

Casarola

for Attilio Bertolucci

Cliffs come sheering down into
woodland here:
The trees – they are chestnuts – spread
to a further drop
Where an arm of water rushes
through unseen
Still lost in leaves: you can hear it
Squandering its way towards the mill
A path crossing a hillslope and a bridge
Leads to at last: the stones lie there
Idle beside it: they were cut from the cliff
And the same stone rises in wall and roof
Not of the mill alone, but of shed on shed
Whose mossed tiles like a city of the dead
Grow green in the wood. There are no
dead here
And the living no longer come
In October to crop the trees: the chestnuts
Dropping, feed the roots they rose from:
A rough shrine sanctifies the purposes
These doors once opened to, a desolation
Of still-perfect masonry. There is a beauty
In this abandonment: there would be more
In the slow activity of smoke
Seeping at roof and lintel; out of each low
Unwindowed room rising to fill
Full with essences the winter wood
As the racked crop dried. Waste
Is our way. An old man
Has been gathering mushrooms. He pauses
To show his spoil, plumped by a soil
Whose sweet flour goes unmilled:
Rapid and unintelligible, he thinks we follow
As we feel for his invitations to yes and no:
Perhaps it's the mushrooms he's telling over
Or this place that shaped his dialect, and
where nature
Daily takes the distinctness from that
signature
Men had left there in stone and wood,
Among waning villages, above the cities of
the plain.

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only half human, half beasts to be locked in pens, whipped, herded, worked and sold like cattle. This is the theme of the *Narrative of Frederick Douglass*, a kind of *Animal Farm* in reverse which depends for its powerful effect on the shocking contrast between tone and content as Douglass describes his early attempts to see himself as something other than a farm animal and finds himself blocked at every turn by his master's no less strenuous efforts to turn him back into a brute:

> We were worked in all weathers. It was never too hot or too cold; it could never rain, blow, hail or snow too hard for us to work in the field . . . The longest days were too short for him, and the shortest nights too long for him. I was somewhat unmanageable when I first went there, but a few months of this discipline tamed me.

This is only one of any number of gruesome, barely credible accounts, all told in the matter-of-fact voice of sweet Swiftian reason. Douglass ended a fugitive, legitimate prey of the slave-holders who lay in wait for him like crocodiles in the jungle of New York. Sixty years later, in 1904, the anonymous autobiography of 'a Georgia Negro Peon' dispassionately described how he and his kind could still lawfully be hunted with bloodhounds through the Georgia swamps ('The white folks had all the courts, all the guns, all the hounds, all the railroads, all the telegraph wires, all the money, and nearly all the land . . .'). Much the same point is made by Robert E. Burns, whose chain gang revelations made a sensation in 1932; and again by Etheridge Knight in 'The Warder Said to Me the Other Day', an elegantly ironic poem published in 1968.

Works like these – and Franklin claims to have uncovered so far only a minute portion – provide eerie and alarming glimpses of American society viewed from the bottom up. The effect is at once absorbing and exhilarating, an affirmation of human generosity and inexhaustible resilience in the face of degradation, deprivation and despair. It is no part of Franklin's scheme to draw the obvious parallel with the Soviet dissident tradition and the literature of the Russian prison camps, though he comes fairly near in his detailed, and horribly convincing, indictment of the 'huge American slave labour camps known as prisons'. But this is an uncomfortable analogy, and one Franklin is in no position to pursue without undermining his equally firmly held conviction that the US prison system is the product of industrial capitalism in decay and that, 'in a communist society where people were happy', things would be different.

A similar naïveté underlies his dual claim that, on the one hand, writers like Douglass deserve to be judged by the most exacting standards and, on the other, all accepted (or 'genteel') canons of literary excellence are suspect anyway. The result is a materialistic and somewhat condescending approach, flatly incompatible with his often sensitive treatment of specific works. Moreover his tendency to equate the physical and economic exploitation of American blacks with the sort of oppression they have suffered at the hands of literary critics ('the sterilising and homogenising process of the bourgeois cultural superstructure') is in the end distinctly frivolous: *The Victim as Criminal and Artist* suffers in short from a streak of simplistic moralising, not to say pure muddle, liable to reassure and comfort those very cultural formalists it was intended to confound.

Jeremy Treglown

Snob Story

The Sweet Dove Died by BARBARA PYM *Macmillan* £4.95
Full Term by J. I. M. STEWART *Gollancz* £4.95
Crossing the Border by JOYCE CAROL OATES *Gollancz* £4.95

After her brief charitable sortie into geriatric bedsitterdom in *Quartet In Autumn*, Barbara Pym is back in Knightsbridge, exploring the romantic half-attachments of a new well-heeled heroine. It's as calculatedly thin-blooded as her other novels but, like them, it achieves surprising pathos through the very limitedness of the expectations it sees in its characters and encourages in the reader.

The mildly waspish, self-absorbed Leonora plays off a rich antique dealer against his bisexual young nephew in a frigid middle-aged last fling, and is left with the uncle. In all this, she is compared with the superficially similar but, to Leonora, inferior and ludicrous Meg, whose own young friend keeps going off and having homosexual affairs; and the contrast, seen through Leonora's eyes, reveals her own spiritual meanness without making Meg any more attractive: 'Soon Meg would say that she had always longed for a child and in the next instant she did. Leonora regretted having offered whisky.' But it's the ironic control that gets the emotional saliva going (Miss Pym is a very culinary novelist, in her finishing-school way) so that when she finally puts a small chop on your plate it can seem like the contents of half an abattoir, for example when Meg returns to see Leonora and more cheerfully describes 'her own case'.

> A sympathetic *woman* doctor had explained so much. Everything, it seemed, tiredness, depression, tears, feeling of inadequacy, regrets for wasted life, could be satisfactorily accounted for.

Such moments of brief but memorable resonance are accompanied, as in Barbara Pym's other work, by touches of high comedy, particularly Humphrey's arrival at Leonora's house at the end. She watches him locking up each door of his car, 'encumbered by a large bunch, sheaf, perhaps, of peonies' – the ungrateful casting about for the right satiric word is a sign that Leonora, though she has lost the nephew, has survived unchanged.

The danger is one of overstating Miss Pym's claims. What she does, after all, has been done in more substance before – not only by Jane Austen (a frequent, and inflated, source of comparison) but by Elizabeth Bowen, whom, incidentally, Leonora happens to be reading. It helps to get her in perspective to see that J. I. M. Stewart can be as rewarding, though his boisterous donnishness is a less tolerable manifestation of the more or less complacent snobbery they share. *Full Term* is the last of Stewart's five Oxford novels, and the closing chapters are full of poignant narrative knottings. Like most of his fiction, it's extremely well-constructed and contains some genuinely funny characters – e.g. the timorous college librarian, his evening walk through the University Parks with Duncan Pattullo dominated by his terror of finding the gates locked at the other end.

What makes it hard to take, especially in the early pages before you get acclimatised, is the ponderous archaism of the style. Pattullo, the narrator, is supposed to be a temporary Fellow, imported only a year ago from his London life as a successful dramatist. But this is a dramatist who thinks stage electricians still talk about rheostats, who refers to people nearby as being 'within bow-shot', whose friends say things like 'This is a damned rum place, Pattullo', and who has a conversation with an undergraduate that goes, 'Junkin is a frightfully good producer, isn't he?' – 'He may become one. He's no end enthusiastic.' He even calls Britain, 'The kingdom'. But if you can get past all that, he's a likeable, gallant, unselfish, romantic kind of chap with a good eye for a yarn: a yarn which, in this case, involves East-West undercover intrigue, in addition to Pattullo's unresolvedly turbulent emotional career.

Both Pym and Stewart manage to set their central characters' personal relationships in various kinds of measuring context: contexts of irony in Pym's case, of real altruism in Stewart's, and of the unavoidable passing of time in both. The solemn domestic absorption of many of Joyce Carol Oates's stories seems narcissistic by comparison, though this prolific and highly acclaimed author often writes well and, of course, her concerns are more obviously up-to-date: the imposition and effects of sex-roles, especially in marriage; the plight of the educated, jobless wife; adultery-drift; and so on. Half of the 15 stories in this collection form a fragmented novel about a couple who have left the States for Canada, so that Evan, a research scientist, can escape doing morally repugnant work in 'defence biology'. His wife Renée is increasingly restless, and her characteristically frantic moves towards and away from an affair with a horrifically self-satisfied married poet are closely described.

Several of the stories are effectively bizarre – one about a mental defective who haunts Renée, for example (though I couldn't help thinking how much more Ian McEwan, say, would have made of this), and another about a meeting between a long-divorced old couple, the man now derelict. And there's an unexpectedly hilarious one about a young American academic, trapped into spending his life editing five letters, held by his college library, from a niece of Kipling's to an undistinguished Canadian. Too often, though, the writing is slackly uncommunicative. Take, for example, this corny piece of literary self-reference of Renée's:

> Our lives are narrative; they are experienced in the flesh . . . but they are recollected as poems, lyrics, condensed, illuminated by a few precise images. It would be dramatic of me to say that our relationship with Blaine ended at that moment . . .

Well, does she *mean* narratives, or does she mean lyrics? Or does she – as 'dramatic' suggests – mean plays? She couldn't care less, of course: the metaphors are so tired that there's nothing to choose between them. And this tendency to let a group of random shots do service for one on target is symptomatic. 'A day in the park,' Evan ruminates in another story much later, 'a day like any other. One of many. One of thousands.' You begin to see what he's getting at, and it's a good example of the style. A fairly typical passage. One of many, in fact. You could find a lot of others like it.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

John Coleman

Bent Sinister

Despair (AA) *The Screen on the Hill*
Chinese Roulette (AA) *Little Bit Ritzy Cinema, Brixton*
The Wild Geese (AA) *Leicester Square Theatre*
Go Tell the Spartans (X) *London Pavilion*
Don't Cry for Me, Little Mother (X) *Gala Royal*

The combination of the late Vladimir Nabokov (a White Russian *émigré* who, not without reason, decided it would be a great day for English when he started writing in it) and of our very own Tom Stoppard (who has drawn a script from a 1932 Nabokov novel, *Despair*, translated by the author from his home tongue into pretty accurate and startling English and up-dated by him in 1965) and of the fecund German director Rainer Werner Fassbinder (around 20 feature films in nine years) is evidently alluring. Promises, promises: it is a wash-out, give or take a sequence. Nabokov, never an author to undersell himself, wrote somewhere of his technique, the verbal conjuror's: 'Those apparatuses – the baffling mirror, the black velvet backdrop, the implied associations and traditions – which the native illusionist, frac-tails flying, can magically use to transcend the heritage in his own way.' At absolute worst, there is something smirking about Nabokov's prose and processes: his frequently first-person narrator's style, self-congratulatory, can't quite be dissociated from the real writer behind the mask. Nor is he always as 'baffling' as he hopes to be: some of us scholarship peasants can see what he is up to fairly early on.

So it is with *Despair*, a hugely over-written affair about a German chocolate manufacturer, Hermann (Dirk Bogarde in the movie), who thinks to have discovered his absolute double one day in the person of a wood-notes-wild tramp, Felix (Klaus Lowitsch). The novel toys with the notion that this doppelgänger is a proper look-alike: it also fidgets with some stuff of Hermann's not realising he is being cuckolded blind by his chubby, peroxided wife, Lydia (Andrea Ferreol). This with an indifferent painter called Ardalion (Volker Spengler).

Hermann decides to use his flukily found 'double' as a victim, since he is fed up with chocolate, which is anyway doing none too well. He stages an insurance racket, killing Felix, swapping clothes, hoping to make off with the loot and his (he thinks) adoring, subservient missus. The extremely simple trouble with Fassbinder's film version of this presumptively subtle stuff is that the point one had already grabbed faster in the book than Nabokov (from his 1965 foreword) seemed to find likely – i.e. that the visual twin is far from resembling old Hermann – in screen is seen to be different-looking somewhere around the second reel. So the jig is up, swiftly, leaving little to wait for. Mirrors, of course, figure – which suits Fassbinder's house-style of reflections, obfuscation, cold long-shot framings. The biddable wife at home is usually caught from a distance, starkers through a doorway on a bed. Stoppard has invented some Nabokovian lines of small, punning merit. 'I am going to do a murder,' says Bogarde, who gives his usual staunch performance in a rotten role (see Visconti's *The Damned*, Liliana Cavani's *The Night Porter*). 'Murder?' echoes Lydia. 'Merger,' he says, picking himself off the verbal ground. There is some of this, which is all right, and there is some of the growing nastiness of Nazism (which Nabokov avoided and Stoppard might well have, too, it serving no useful purpose): Hermann is arch-narcissist, if he is anything, amoral, apolitical, a purring self-seeker. All those cosmopolitan names at work: and *Despair* emerges as the right, wrong title.

More Fassbinder. The adventurous Little Bit Ritzy, a newish independent cinema in Brixton, is chancing its arm to the pit with *Chinese Roulette*, made in '76 and the sort of tricky movie certain American intellectuals of means quietly cream over. It boils rapidly down to a bitter version of 'The Game', that late-night cross-questioning which New Yorkers subject one another to. Here we have a husband, Gerhard (Alexander Allerson) and a wife, Ariane (Margit Carstensen), who both pretend to be going other places but turn up with their respective lovers (Anna Karina, Ulli Lommel) at their country chateau on the same weekend. Their crippled daughter, Angela (Andrea Schober, full-lipped and beastly knowing), also turns up, swinging on crutches, with her deaf governess (the enchanting Macha Méril). To complete the boringly bizarre house-party, there is another Fassbinder trouper, Brigitte Mira, as the resident housekeeper, brutally known as Kast, and blond Volker Spengler as her son Gabriel, general dogsbody and would-be prose poet.

There are hints of assorted complicities, liaisons beyond the obvious ones and there is an overall tendency to shoot everything with the maximum of deviousness: through glass; the camera abruptly lifting to look down on nothing special; a penultimate, 360° whirling bit of fanciness as hubby embraces wife, who has just, literally, shot the governess, maybe intending to get her needling daughter. 'Basically, they believe I'm to blame for their messed-up lives,' the kid has confided to Gabriel earlier. The crucial sequence here is the Chinese Roulette or 'game' matter, which maimed Angela sets up. They split into two groups and one group opts for a victim, asking such questions as, 'If the person was a car, what kind of car would he be?', and then nastier ones, leaning towards concentration camps and the like. It would appear to want to hum with significance: it just buzzes for chic, like one of those dawnish, Manhattan penthouse parties, where everyone is so sparkily disliking everyone else they have only their minds to lose. And, perhaps, they are also willing an amusing disaster before sunrise.

That pauper's John Ford, Andrew V. McLaglen, has made a very long nonsense, *The Wild Geese*, which – to guess from a scamped ending – was probably even longer once. I found the first two reels unwholesomely exhilarating. The plot-farrago has approximately to do with a recruitment of mercenaries, led by a hollow-cheeked Richard Burton (has gun, will kill), from London to parachute into Africa and rescue an imprisoned black leader, one Limbani. Before the curtains opened to screen this expensive expedition towards the box-office, we had sort of martial Western music played to us for a while. It put me in a bad mood, where I stayed: except for the business of assembling the big-name do-or-die boys from all over, which is normally a pleasant lark. Think of *The League of Gentlemen*, for example. The rest is rather like a cartoon-strip rendering of one of the several Entebbe films. Reginald Rose's screenplay has its moments. I think I caught Burton, a drunk when not killing, brownly mouthing, 'My liver will be buried separately, with honours' – for instance. Stewart Granger reappears after some 10 years' absence from celluloid as an evil British knight, deeply into copper. I hope he got cold. It is a profoundly muddled and *macho* occasion and will probably make money, dammit.

As may Ted Post's *Go Tell the Spartans*, with limping Major Burt Lancaster similarly beleaguered with a posse of Vietnam misfits, trying to hold on to a futile, deserted village in that most appalling of all wars in 1964. May I suggest if you go to *The Wild Geese* that you should likewise go to this? It has one lovely crazy confessional anecdote from Lancaster (to do with a general's wife, a gazebo in Washington, the President and the general dropping by while his trousers are down and the wife enthusiastic): or Why I Never Made General. Elsewhere, the interest would lie in the different ways British and American actors are invited to play stereotypes. *Don't Cry for Me, Little Mother* is a Munich/Zagreb co-production, an appalling length of fake-historicity and lubricity, unfetchingly based on the strange life of Eva Perón.

Sport

Russell Davies

Chain Gangs

As I write, the Giotto-eyed Evert and the child-man Connors appear to be cruising towards the Wimbledon championship victories I dreaded for them. This means that my kiss of death is taking somewhat longer than usual to have its effect. Never mind; by the time you read this, they should both be safely out of the tournament. Like Roscoe Tanner, who went out to Nastase – speeded by a classically bog-eyed decision by a Wimbledon linesman. Having emitted his panic-stricken yelp of 'FAWP!', this official was painfully choked, I trust, by the cloud of chalk thrown up by Tanner's second (and 'losing') service.

The trouble is that once a foolish judgment like this has been passed, there seems to be no

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repealing it at Wimbledon. Any complaint passes swiftly up the small chain of command to the Referee, who passes it back again down an identical chain of blind loyalty. The Referee says the Umpire was right, who said the linesman was not wrong. I suggest that, at the very least, some more rational possibility of appeal should be devised, particularly when the disputed point puts a player out of the championships. At odd moments during this year's play, I have actually felt myself to be on the outskirts of sympathy for the greasy-fronded Nastase, whose behaviour is admittedly appalling, but whose senses appear to me, on average, considerably better informed than those of the people on court to decide the fate of his shots.

In cricket, a sodden Test brought little enlightenment, unless anyone was seriously in doubt as to the batting form of Brearley. It is the respected opinion of John Arlott that the England captain is too good a player to go for very long without a decent score, but behind this view, I suspect, lies a desire to encourage, rather than a cold-eyed appraisal of the stroke Brearley played against Sarfraz last week. At the same time, three considerations amply justify Brearley's retention. First, there is no obvious replacement, the recent unavailability of Boycott (to be prolonged by the arrival of the New Zealander bowler Collinge?) being only the latest in a series of mysterious withdrawals that must surely have convinced most non-Yorkshire observers by now that the man is too obsessed with his own performance to have the proper concern for the welfare of any team around him.

Secondly, Brearley took two excellent slip catches, which proved that whatever else has gone, it is not his eye for the speeding ball. And thirdly, the comradely glee on the faces of Brearley's team in the TV close-ups after each of his catches added up to a thoroughly convincing vote of confidence. Actually, the catches impressed me mightily, mainly because, a week or so ago, I ventured on to a cricket pitch with intent to play for the first time in 14 years. Whereupon I rediscovered how difficult it is to catch a cricket ball, particularly behind the wicket, where everything you get, however dollied, has peculiar spins on it that make the missile look almost ovoid as it comes buzzing at you. That at least is my excuse for dropping a catch even a Wimbledon linesman would have taken. Then I went on to bowl and got hit, by a bespectacled wicket-keeper called Von Tunzelmann, for the biggest six in German military history.

But at least we were playing. There wasn't a lot of that in the Test. Unencumbered by any knowledge of textiles or plastics, I am firmly of the presumption that something ought to have been done by now about covering cricket pitches. The size of the problem is the problem. Even at Wimbledon, whole platoons of swarthy roustabouts are required to haul vasty canvases into position in order to protect a single tennis court; so an enlarged imitation of this method is clearly unsuitable for cricket – unless one makes it a condition of entry to first-class games that all spectators will be pressed into service unrolling giant tarpaulin sausages – sausages which, if stored all round the boundary, would be so great as to obscure the view of the first several rows (and to give the more sensitive kind of player the nightmare illusion of playing inside a gigantic inflatable canoe).

The clue to success in this operation surely lies in the tent-like arrangement Wimbledon contrives when the weather has really closed down for the day. The great virtue of tents is that water runs off them, into convenient channels. Now surely it would be possible to be-tent a cricket square. All you would need would be rows of small steel sockets let into the grass just outside the edge of the square – and fitted, no doubt, with ground-level green plastic caps when not in use. Into these your segmented aluminium tent-poles would slot. Tenting, made of that lightweight silvery space-suit stuff (luckily I don't know how much it costs) would then be hoisted on these poles, and would slope down gently to the opposite side of the square, to be held in place by a plastic guttering arrangement likewise clamped to the ground via sockets. From there, the water – but I have run out of space. Thank goodness for that.

Radio

Peter Porter

Psychopomp

Any 19th-century masterpiece too long to be read can always be adapted for radio. This is a redemptive and not a cynical doctrine. A short while ago in the NS, Peter Conrad pointed out that when some spokesman of the arts says that a classic is unreadable, he means only that he hasn't read it. Compiling lists of masterpieces you haven't read is one of today's parlour games. There is a variation whereby you list works you did read once, but have long since forgotten. One such for me is Balzac's novel *Le Cousin Pons*, of which I had only the dimmest memory before I listened to Radio 4's adaptation of it in three episodes on Sunday nights. In this excellent production it emerged not only as a stunning masterpiece but as a flamboyantly exact analysis of the darker side of the French character. The novel is a hymn to avarice, and paints a world where the good are either helpless or stupid and the evil are infinitely resourceful and tireless. Balzac's Paris is so rich in portraits of plausible grotesques that you need a concordance (such as Felicien Marceau has provided) to find your way around in it. This is what radio does so well, with the nicely inflected voices of the actors enabling you to enjoy instant identification. Joan O'Connor's adaptation simplified the story into three well-demarcated acts. In the first, Pons still has hopes of endearing himself to his snobbish relatives. In the second, he has nothing left but the friendship of the faithful Schmucke (the only decent people in Balzac's Paris are Germans). Finally, the vultures move in, and even the expectation of a posthumous revenge falling on his appalling cousins is thwarted.

The originality of Balzac as an artist lies in his celebration of 'objects' and possessions. Pons's 'bric-à-brac' are eventually identified as Rubenses, Breughels and Van Dycks, but this does not strike you as hyperbole. The story can be felt in symbolic terms – the 'horrible, green, corpse-like figure' of the lawyer Fraizier is Pons's psychopomp, as Schmucke (jewel) is his protecting talisman. Art, like money (Balzac seems to be saying), is potential energy, but what it liberates in most men is either the will to do evil or the lure of self-destruction. Pons is almost contemptible in his foolishness; the people around him are loathsome in their energy. After three evenings of this sustained nastiness, I was prepared to hail Balzac as the greatest portraitist of evil in literature. Stephen Murray and Lewis Stringer were superb as Pons and Schmucke and Joyce Redman made Madame Cibot, the concierge, entirely convincing. Gordon Gostelow, provider of peerless vignettes on radio and television, excelled himself as Rémonenque, the back-street dealer. The producer, Jane Morgan, never allowed Balzac's poetic vision to be swamped by remorseless detail. All in all, this was radio at its finest – presenting a great writer to society which has lost its taste for his expansive dimensions.

John Arden's new play *Pearl* (Radio 4) is Balzacian in its density of detail and in the ramifications of its complex plot, but it lacks Balzac's inner consistency to an almost disastrous degree. It is certainly a big and original work by radio's present standards, and was recognised as such by being given a loyal coverage on LWT's *South Bank Show*. Arden's previous long fantasy, *The Bagman, or The Impromptu of Muswell Hill*, was one of the most inventive radio plays of the decade. Like *Pearl*, it showed an artist wondering how to reconcile his political convictions with his natural independence of conscience.

The Bagman, though, had a dreamlike freshness which was preserved by Arden's ingenious speech, and the Blake and Bunyan influences stayed well this side of pastiche. *Pearl* is built up of half-timbered Jacobean and extravagant theatre fustian. Characters sonorously pronouncing 'I do most apprehensively misdoubt . . .'; courtesans speaking of 'the curvatures of my white body'; someone saying of the local lord that 'he has written to enkindle his whore' – such language doesn't only send conviction flying, it brings out the fruity and the over-ripe in actors' performances. There is one rule for plays set in the past which a writer will break at his peril – their language must be anachronistic. Any attempt at imitating Shakespeare and his contemporaries in a modern play will fail disastrously. Both Peter Barnes and Arden have proved this before now.

Pearl is set in England at the time of the impeachment of Strafford. The complications of the plot turn about the presentation of a play (the story of Esther and Ahasuerus) to a Parliamentary audience in London. Arden's present Irish concerns are reflected in the possibility of a 17th-century alliance between the anti-Royalist forces in London and the Catholic O'Neills. Pearl is the daughter of an Irish mother and an American Indian father, and is sent into England as an O'Neill agent. She becomes the mistress of the playwright Backhouse (the symbolism of Arden's characters' names is rather cloudy) and is blinded at the end by the counter-revolutionary agent Captain Catso (equals cazzo, slang for penis).

The happy alliance of Catholic and Protestant revolutionaries is frustrated, and history takes the course we know it did. None of this is as enlivening as it sounds and, for all the play's turbulence of issues and extravagance of language, it goes nowhere near as deeply into human motives as Balzac's cool exposure of bourgeois Paris does. Balzac's ver-

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isimilitude turns out to be more poetic than Arden's fantasy. Some of the acting in *Pearl* was strident, but Elizabeth Bell gave a fine performance in the title role.

Theatre

Benedict Nightingale

Oh Cunning Enemy

Measure for Measure *Stratford*
American Buffalo *Cottesloe*
The Singular Life of Albert Nobbs *New End*
Hindle Wakes *Greenwich*

The blindfolded ancestor of Justice Melford Stevenson to be seen dangling weedily over the austere black stage as the audience settles into its seats suggests that the new *Measure for Measure* is to concentrate on the flaws of the judiciary, the lapses of the law; but in fact, the interest of Harry Kyle's production is that it finds time and room for a good deal else too. It dresses Angelo and his henchmen as Puritans, Lucio and his chums as slovenly Cavaliers, thus giving their tussle some ideological shape. It uses a trio of whores, patently pox-ridden beneath their come-on wigs and glad rags, and all desperately afraid that the clean-up campaigners will destroy their precarious livelihood, to suggest that the woes of Vienna have as much to do with poverty as passion. It transforms Barnardine from the usual dissolute ruin into a sort of Aryan Caliban, the stark-naked but not-undignified victim of other people's oppression, in order to make a similar point. And over it all is tacitly inscribed the slogan that greeted the superstitious at ancient Delphi, *gnothe seauton*.

Perhaps the key line is Escalus's plug for the Duke, that he 'contended especially to know himself'. Here's no triumphant voyeur, smugly eyeing the disintegration of authority in his supposed absence, but, as Michael Pennington plays him, a grave and passive prince who has seen it all and seen through it all, up to and including his own aspiring superego, and now feels he must stir others to parallel discoveries. Angelo must own up to his sexuality, admit his weaknesses, and recognise the arrogance of an uncompromising absolutism. Isabella must renounce that shrill and defensive chastity of hers, and become a woman.

The first of these dual courses is the more satisfactorily steered at Stratford. Jonathan Pryce's Angelo is an innocent in agony, a bookish civil servant happy enough when he's mechanically signing warrants, or playing with abstract ideas, or doing the 17th-century equivalent of *The Times* crossword; but a snuffling, seething, palpitating parcel of exposed nerves when his defences are broken. It's a precisely judged performance, alert to the perils of excess yet willing to take unlooked-for risks, like the flustered, priggish wave Mr Pryce directs at an invisible Mephistopheles on the line, 'oh cunning enemy that, to catch a saint, with saints doth bait thy hook'. It's also the only time I've been fully convinced that Angelo means it when, exposed for a fraud and hypocrite, he pleads for 'immediate sentence and sequent death'. Paola Dionisotti has more trouble transmuting the ecstatic nun into the would-be wife, but she too has her moments, notably when she's gleefully working out the tactics of enveigling the seducer into bed with his abandoned fiancée, the unlikely Mariana. Add John Nettles's knowing Lucio, Richard Griffiths's commonsensical Pompey and Raymond Westwell's benign old Escalus, and we're left with an observant, large-minded production, one that should neither affront the purist nor disappoint the bold.

American Buffalo reintroduces us to David Mamet, the transatlantic prodigy whose *Duck Variations* and *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* left reviewers divided when they were presented in London last year. As it turns out, it's much the strongest of the three, no less in love with its characters' peculiar rhetoric, in this case a lyrical blend of the stilted and the swinish, but rather less inclined to let style swamp content. Pinter, for once, makes an apt comparison, at least up to a point. Certainly, it is necessary to pick one's way carefully and attentively through the silences, the banalities, the inarticulate mouthings and seeming irrelevancies, noting the undercurrents and mapping out the motives. The three men gathered in Donnie's junk-shop are, it seems, small-time criminals about to burgle a coin-collector. What do they mean to each other, how far does their mutual trust stretch, to what extent are they willing to manipulate, exploit and even betray one another?

The play, as this suggests, is all about friendship, a subject on which the touchiest character, Teach, has his partisan views. If an acquaintance wrongs him, however slightly, it is total betrayal: if he wrongs an acquaintance, however deeply, it is good business, in the great American tradition of free enterprise. For a time it appears that he has lured Donnie into the loveless and paranoid world he inhabits. The store-owner is persuaded, first to break a professional promise to his protégé, Bob, then to believe that Bob has swindled him; and it begins to look as if all is dog-eat-dog and crook-bash-crook. I had better not reveal precisely how Mamet engineers his way out of this moral hole, because it would be worth your while to discover for yourselves, the more so given nice performances from Dave King, Michael Feast and, as Teach, a furrowed and twitching Jack Shepherd. Enough to record that he extricates himself neatly from the long black shadow of Pinter, a playwright always apt to reduce human beings to voracious orifices, ruled by lust and greed. Mamet has his own opinions, which are altogether more charitable and upbeat. Friendship *is* possible, even in the grottier recesses of Fagin's kitchen.

The life of Albert Nobbs was singular because he was actually she, an Irishwoman impelled by poverty to pass herself off as a man and thus become a waiter in a Dublin hotel. Singular, and sad, because she never achieved her only ambition, which was to make a platonic 'marriage' with a companionable girl and use the tips she had hoarded to open a shop. Simone Benmussa adapted the tale from George Moore, made a considerable success of it in Paris, and has redirected it for Hampstead, picking up two fine actresses somewhere en route: Julia Foster, Albert's wayward and flirtatious quarry, and Susannah York, as po-faced and world-weary as Albert must have been but far more handsome than history reports. Hers is not the face of a failure, even with cheeks whitened up and mouth angled down. Personally, I found the tone too insistently solemn and elegiac, and felt that a little humour, irony and sceptical inspection of motives would not have compromised the play's essential respect for its protagonist; but the women in the audience made it quite clear at the end that they disagreed.

They should find at least as much eloquence in Stanley Houghton's *Hindle Wakes*, surely the liveliest play Miss Horniman brought to Edwardian Manchester. When the rich mill-owner's son is persuaded to make an honest woman of the girl employee with whom he's been furtively weekending in Wales, he soon discovers she's far less compliant than everyone automatically assumes. He isn't good enough for her. He is her 'little fancy', 'an amusement, a lark'. When she marries, it will be to someone much stronger than him. The boy is aghast, hearing the usual male excuses from a woman; and so, of course, were audiences in 1912. Even now, it is rare to find the double standard attacked with such nerve and verve. A well-played production, this, and a revival to relish.

Television

Julian Barnes

The Magnus

There was a full-frontal male nude on *Don't Ask Me* (Yorkshire) the other evening, at the disturbingly early time of 7.24. I mention it as part of an agreement reached between this column and the National Viewers and Listeners Association to monitor the amount of sex on television. (They're campaigning for a lot less, I'm campaigning for a bit more, but we've agreed to pool our research facilities.) It was, though, even I would admit, a thoroughly disagreeable sequence. The belly of a mountainously pregnant woman was smeared with what the 'scientist' on the programme called 'sound-conducting jelly' (a likely story); then a sort of all-purpose Pifco product – hair-drier? hot-dog warmer? – was thrust against the slimy epidermis. Our attention was directed to a blue and twitching picture on the television monitor beside the bulbous expectee. At first I took it for a blurry rerun of Buzz Aldrin wielding his lunar mashie, but excited medical yelps of 'now we're looking for the sex organs' and, finally, an Archimedean 'and right here are the scrotals!' convinced me that it was all something much seamier. Those responsible for the exercise claimed they were merely trying to discover the sex of the child; but since the poor sonic-saturated babe was due to yield up its secret in a week's time anyway, this sounded rather thin. Still, it does raise serious questions. At what age do televised scrotals become objectionable? Could one perhaps plot a graph relating the age of the organs to the earliest acceptable viewing time? The NVLA and I are setting up a

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working party on this one, and will report back to you soon.

The rest of *Don't Ask Me* (of which a new series has just started) is theoretically quite enjoyable. An ironic teenager pretends to want to know whether bears really like honey; so they get a 35-stone bear along ('Oh, he's huge, he's just like an enormous teddy bear,' squeaked a link-girl clearly put out by such an unnatural coincidence) and we find out that bears do indeed like honey, not to mention milk, Guinness, insects, and proximate bits of studio presenters. The drawback, though, is that the show has become a vehicle for Magnus Pyke. For a long time I've managed to keep an open mind about him by the simple expedient of avoiding his every appearance; but you can't legislate (as Brian Clough would say) for the ads, and the scrawny buffer has recently been flogging us some perfectly ordinary washing-machine in the middle of otherwise watchable programmes. Standing there like a hunchbacked tic-tac man, Pyke twitches and foams away: the machine *squeezes* like this, he cries, playing an invisible (and badly rusted-up) accordion; it *tumbles* like this, he snorts, pretending to wind a berserk ball of wool. It would be fine of course, if he had some expensive disease; then we could all feel sorry for him. But his manual peripeteia seems knowing and rehearsed, since *Don't Ask Me* constantly trades on it. At the start of the show, Austin Mitchell (I suppose the next election is quite close, after all) careered into shot on a hover-lawnmower, grinning excitedly: 'I was about as much in control there as one of Magnus Pyke's arms.' Off in the wings, one assumed, Pyke was duly winding up the complex system of rubber bands, concealed in his suit, which makes his limbs behave as they do.

Once set in motion, however, the thrashing Pyke turns out to be surprisingly bad at explaining things: scarcely more lucid, on the whole, than TV's other hired idiot, 'Professor' Stanley Unwin. He says 'As a scientist' a lot, and talks fast, but this only increases his resemblance to a patent-medicine huckster in a bad Western. After non-explaining why a vanload of flying budgies weighs less (or more – I couldn't work it out) than a vanload of squatting budgies, he tried to tell a girl how and why a football swerves. What he said mostly were things like: 'Nowyou'reaclever girlbutI'mnothavingyoukickingafootballround thestudioandbreakingthewindowshahahahabut youcouldn'tbecausetherearen'tanywindowsin thestudiohahaha.' Come to think of it, nobody in the studio audience actually laughed at this, his wittiest sally; so perhaps he does have an expensive disease after all.

Still, on some programmes even Magnus Pyke might be a relief. *The Nuts and Bolts of the Economy* seminars (Granada) are powerfully boring, capable, with a following wind, I should think, of stunning a sheep at 1,000 yards. Presenter Mike Scott – the one who looks unsettlingly like Larry Grayson, but introduces boring serious shows as opposed to boring funny ones – was even reduced to savagely chiding the experts he has assembled for a pleasant expenses jaunt to Mottram Hall, Cheshire: 'The average chap may have switched off 15 minutes ago,' he warned – perhaps a coded message telling them all to look lively or their fees would be cut. The average chap might also have spotted what's wrong with the weekend seminar system: that it's awfully hard to put the knife into a chap who only an hour earlier lent you a razor-blade and helped you to a second mound of kedgeree. 'I agree with Hugh, Mike,' agreed Jim Prior, 'there's nothing basically wrong with the British worker – or with the British manager, John.' Everyone is concerned to appear flexible, open-minded and progressive. Whenever an unreconstructed capitalist sentiment pops up the embarrassment level soars. So watch out for Charles Dumas, a dapper Planner from General Motors, whose finely-stitched suit, fashionably huge spectacles and suave delivery might lead you to think his brain was as up-to-date and well-cut as the rest of him. Not so. To prove how lazy workers are, he pointed to aircraft production in 1940: in the course of a single year, the same men using the same equipment managed to double their output. Now you or I might think this had something to do with the prevailing continental unrest. Dumas called it 'going from not trying to trying'.

World in Action's report on the National Front (Granada) was sober, diligent and frequently chilling (victims showing stab-wounds; ex-NF members casually recalling thuggeries; gut slogans like 'Niggers make good fertilisers'); yet in a way unsurprising. A Special Branch infiltrator, a scatter-brained defector, and Tyndall's own letters conclusively confirmed that the Front is racist, anti-Semitic, hot for violence and deeply Nazi. Didn't everyone suspect this (in a way that amounts to knowing) all along? Even so, this was a programme which should simply be run once a week until the next election.

John Mole

Her Song

'Dear Mickey Mouse, our wires have crossed
Because too long my heart was set
Upon a limber marionette
And only came to you when lost.

Oh stronger men in sharper suits
Have swept me from the bustling floor
But still, my love, how I adore
Those tiny yellow plastic boots.

Too late, too late to burn your ears
With talk about you now you're gone.
I feel my headache coming on,
The throbbing which must end in tears.

But while your mischief fills the screen
I stretch towards you for a kiss
Then falter, "What's the point of this?"
His children wonder what I mean.

Supposing, love, they had been yours,
A little mine but oh your nose and
Yip yip Yankee lederhosen –
Just my smile, perhaps, no more.

The sun sets as you skip away,
The circle closes to a dot,
Their father likes his supper hot . . .
I've hardly thought of him all day.'

And so she sang, as one half dead
Alleviates the afternoon,
Because she knew that someone soon
Would help her gently back to bed.

Art

John Spurling

Earth Father

Henry Moore at the Serpentine *Serpentine Gallery*
The Drawings of Henry Moore and **The Henry Moore Gift** *Tate Gallery*
Henry Moore the Carver *Fischer Fine Art.*

G. F. Watts's *Physical Energy* – the enormous black horse reined up to the brow of the slope above the Serpentine while his giant rider shades his eyes and peers south-west towards Gloucester Road – looks more hunted than hunting these days. Spread out on a broad front behind have appeared several passive things which although they give no sign of pursuit – their whole tendency being static, their activity self-contained – nevertheless call in question *Physical Energy*'s very title. More than ever he stands revealed, like a politician's speech which makes use of big ideas without in any way having them, as a mere piece of rhetoric, a set of conventional symbols for physical energy. But what could Watts do, wanting to express energy, except model a three-dimensional picture of some energetic subject in frozen movement and for good measure enlarge it and rough up the surface a bit?

One Henry Moore, seventh child of a Yorkshire miner and six years old at the time of Watts's death, discovered that the answer lay in the soil. He scaled down the landscape, emphasised its human associations and, as it were, earthed the whole idea of energy. Two outstanding advantages followed: first, he was able to exploit a rich store of unstaled images; and secondly, he did not have to strive after illusory effects of movement. The landscape, because of its different time-scale, is in itself an expression of frozen movement.

He did not, of course, arrive at his discovery overnight. Indeed it is perhaps only now, on the eve of his 80th birthday, with the appearance of these particular massive things in Kensington Gardens, that the full nature of what he has been up to all these years is exposed. He began traditionally with life drawing and still considers that the greatest influence on his sculpture has been the study of the human figure. In the large exhibition of his drawings at the Tate there are 61 life drawings, the last dating from as recently as 1954. Yet even here one can see, with hindsight, where he was going, with his preference for broad-beamed models and his characteristic superimposition, by the time of his first one-man show in 1928, of sectional lines which turn nudes into contour maps.

At the same time as he was making life drawings to learn about the human figure, Moore was using another kind of drawing as 'a help towards making sculpture' and he continued to do so until the mid-1950s, when quite naturally, as if only half realising that he had at last crossed the boundary dividing figures with landscape associations from land-

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scapes with figurative associations, he substituted maquettes for drawings. Alan Wilkinson, who made the Tate selection, records in his catalogue that Moore could not remember whether the maquette for the Unesco *Reclining Figure* of 1956, the last sculpture for which there are related drawings, was based on the drawings or the other way round. The working model for this figure is part of Moore's gift to the Tate of 36 sculptures, all but one from the period 1951-68, and contrasts strikingly with the three unequivocally figurative works nearest to it in date, *Falling Warrior, Seated Woman* and *Woman*, suggesting a marked reluctance on Moore's part to make any decisive break with his origins. Even among the most recent works inside the Serpentine Gallery there are primarily figurative pieces such as the black marble *Reclining Figure: Curved* and *Torso*.

Moore's first escape-route from the enfeebled tradition symbolised by Watts's *Physical Energy* was through the study of alternative sculptural traditions, especially the Egyptian, Etruscan, Mexican and African. Later, on a travelling scholarship to Italy, he came under the monumental influences of Masaccio and Michelangelo, though still suspicious of the Greek ideal revived by the Renaissance, and later still, in the 1930s, his sculpture grew briefly biomorphic and surrealist, after Arp, Brancusi and Picasso. Small carvings in various opulent materials (ebony, verde di prato, alabaster, marble) which show some of these influences can be seen at Fischer Fine Art. The transformation of figure into landscape began innocently enough with Moore's intense interest in a Mexican reclining sculpture of the rain-spirit Chacmool. By way of a 1928 commission for the headquarters of London Transport and a stone reclining figure of the same year (studies for both of which are in the exhibition of drawings), Moore discovered his central motif, in the image of Chacmool crossed with Michelangelo's *Dawn* from the Medici Chapel. What was it about Chacmool? Moore himself says: 'Its stillness and alertness, a sense of readiness – and the whole presence of it, and the legs coming down like columns.' Following Michelangelo he twisted Chacmool's legs round sideways and lifted the left arm to rest on the head so that his own first reclining figure already possessed, in addition to its monumentality, most of the elements – asymmetry, holes, hills, hollows, the thrust of one form towards another and the pressure of one form on another – which were to preoccupy him through variation after variation up to the present day.

His other main motif, the mother and child ('I discovered when drawing, I could turn every little scribble, blot or smudge into a Mother and Child') pre-dated the reclining figure, surfaced again as life drawings of his wife and daughter in the 1940s and became absorbed into the landscape sculptures in two ways: as a smaller, rounded form sheltered by a larger, concave form or thrusting towards one of its protuberances and by extension as a form actually inside another. 'Force, Power,' he has said, 'is made by forms straining or pressing from inside. Knees, elbows, forehead, knuckles, all seek to press outwards.' As Moore increasingly opened out and split up the inside structure of his figures into its component elements, so he found himself increasingly concerned with the underlying structure of landscape. At the Serpentine Gallery the glass case of objects from Moore's studio contains, as well as maquettes for many of the sculptures on display, a fascinating collection of found objects: bones, flints, the skulls of small animals or birds, shells, pebbles, etc. Just as maquettes displaced drawings, so these objects, images of landscape at the same time as actual fragments of it, now sometimes displace maquettes as the original inspiration for a piece of sculpture, complicating, extending and occasionally altogether transforming the old reclining and mothering motifs.

In a fairly recent work such as *Large Two Forms* both the mothering motif and the reclining motif (divided as so often into two parts) are only dimly discernible in what has become a male-female motif. The rounded child form, now grown into a vast pelvis (which might also be the legs of a two-piece reclining figure got to its feet), thrusts towards the concave mother-torso form which, seen from behind, is nothing but a huge misshapen bronze ring. At the Tate there is a drawing of this piece; instead of being a model for the sculpture, it was done afterwards, to suggest a landscape setting for it, not against polite trees and a view of the top of the Albert Memorial as at the Serpentine, but on a bare moor and dwarfed by a range of mountains. If one or two of these latest works seem grandiose it is not because, like Watts's horse and rider, they only pretend to embody physical energy. On the contrary, it is because they have grown too powerful for such a domestic setting as Kensington Gardens. At the end of his long, slow process of discovering the full sculptural potential of landscape, Moore still retains that peculiarly modest sense of human scale noticeable in the early carvings at Fischer's. The latest works are not intended to dominate us, but to mediate between us and the real grandeur of nature.

Weekend Competition

No 2522 Set by Ms de Meaner

Belloc actually wrote surprisingly few Cautionary Tales; so why not add to the canon? As a very special treat, up to 20 lines. By 21 July.

Result of No 2519 Set by Spiro Keats

Academic literary critics are already running out of subjects for research. We asked you to supply titles of future works, when they have been forced to get down to the real dreck.

Report by Fatboy

Frankly, I didn't think all that much of this comp when it was set. If you ask me, Spiro is beginning to lose his grip (I say this in the full confidence that he'll never get to read this report – he rarely seems to bother much nowadays). He coptered off some weeks ago, murmuring something about Caroline and the Med as he airily caned a flunkey with his swagger-stick. It's a well-known historical pattern that the dictator who loses interest in the wielding of power and turns to sensual indulgence instead cannot have long to go. Take the recent incident of Dan Drough and the five-letter word: the old Spiro would never have let Fat Jeff and Little Keith exercise the basic right of hire-and-fire. The Comp Complex, in short, is a classic example of a corrupt, hierarchical, class-ridden society in decline. Spiro is off on his travels (he suffers not so much from the Bunker Mentality as the Debunker Mentality); how long can his profoundly anti-democratic organisation survive in its present form? As for this week, what would Spiro have given? A mere Wilson, probably. So a handsome Newton for each crackling mot.

Agape Before Eros: Sprung Tensions in Barbara Cartland
Shivering Timbers: The Vessel as Moral Modality in C. S. Forester
The Book and the Ring: Problems of Time and Form in Dick Francis
W. J. WEBSTER

The Platonic Dream: Concepts of Immaculacy in Barbara Cartland
Odds and Ends: Collated Starting Prices and Tote Returns in Dick Francis
What's in a Name?: Creative Eponymy in Jilly Cooper
FRANK ANDERSON

If you're Viking Call Me Early: Fears of Missing the Boat in Thor Heyerdahl
The Naked and the Dud: Fears of Impotence in Norman Mailer
Is there a Doctor in the Nurse?: A Study of Unprofessional Conduct in Richard Gordon
ADAM O'RIORDAN

Seven Tepees of Ambiguity: Walt Whitman's Wigwam Imagery
Seven Toupees of Ambiguity: Hair Fetishes in the Kojak Novels
To the Fenland Station: 19th Century East Anglian Railway Poetry
P. BALDWIN

The Kitchen Sphinx: Ambiguity in Shirley Conran
The Bottled Imp: Pharmacology and Oral Fixation in the Novels of Jacqueline Susann
BILL GREENWELL

Spaghetti Unction: Patterns of Consumption in *The Godfather*
The Cybernetic Heart: Absences in the Writing of Len Deighton
BASIL RANSOME

The Irreversible Executive: Orgasm and Higher Management in the Novels of Jacqueline Susann
Nothingness, Queerness and Folk: The Importance of the Family in Catherine Cookson
ROY KELLY

The Young Orther: A Freudian Look at the Spelling of Daisy Ashford
What Ho, Fink-Nottle: The Significance of the Double Barrel in P. G. Wodehouse
JOYCE JOHNSON

Travels Without My Aunt: The Lack of Mystery in Nagel
SARA SPAIN

'Ouch!': The Genesis of Institutional Sadism in the Fiction of Frank Richards
JOHN DIGBY

Choraephaeus or Tyrant? Dominance Strategy as Deployed by William: A Study of *William the Bold*
LIONEL BURMAN

Moby Dick: Fictional Diseases in the Works of Richard Gordon
E. COLI

From Beowulf to the Archers: Perspectives upon the English Saga as a Cognitive Art Form
M. K. CHEESEMAN

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Tony Miles

Chess

No. 90 **Karpov and Korchnoy**

In little over a week the first world championship match for six years will begin at Baguio City in the Philippines. In some ways the match promises to be even more interesting than its famous Reykjavik predecessor.

The holder of the title, Karpov, has in the last three years proved himself to be probably the greatest World Champion of modern times (the only other real claimant being the late lamented R J Fisher). Throughout his reign he has taken part in the world's strongest tournaments and won all but two. Indeed until very recently no one would have predicted that this title defence would be anything more than a formality. That, however, was before the candidates matches, before Korchnoy had effectively demolished Polugaevskey in 7 games and Spassky in a further 10. Suddenly, remarkably, Karpov has a real opponent.

Korchnoy's defection means that, nominally at least, the match will not be the statutory all-Russian affair. I am not sure what flag, if any, he will play under – the skull and crossbones certainly seems appropriate – but I believe he intends to play for Switzerland at the next Olympiad.

Both players have clearly improved since they last met in Moscow in 1974. On that occasion the Soviet powers-that-be clearly intended that Karpov should win, and though he duly did, it was only by the narrowest margin. I expect him to repeat that result, basically because he is the more self-controlled and single-minded of the two. Korchnoy is highly motivated and has tremendous stamina but tends to be prone to distraction. His habitual time-trouble may also prove costly. However, another good start, and an early win or two might make a great difference.

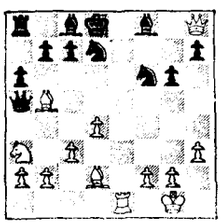
From their last match

White: V Korchnoy **Black: A Karpov**

1. P-Q4, N-KB3; 2. N-KB3, P-K3; 3. P-KN3, P-QN3; 4. B-N2, B-N2; 5. P-B4, B-K2; 6. N-B3, 0-0; 7. Q-B2, P-B4; 8. P-Q5, PxP; 9. N-KN5, N-B3; 10. NxQP, P-N3; 11. Q-Q2, NxN(?) 12. BxN, R-N1? Amazingly Karpov's seconds had analysed this position before the game, and decided it was all right for Black. So Karpov played the move quickly, only realising the imminent disaster as his hand released the piece. **13. NxRP, R-K1;** If 13... KxN; 14. Q-R6ch, K-N1; 15. QxPch, K-R1; 16. Q-R6ch, K-N1; 17. B-K4 wins quickly. **14. Q-R6, N-K4; 15. N-N5, BxN; 16. BxB, QxB, 17 QxQ, BxB; 18. 0-0, BxP; 19. P-B4, Resigns.**

Problem 90

White to play. How should the game go? Answers to me at the NEW STATESMAN post-marked not later than 19 July.

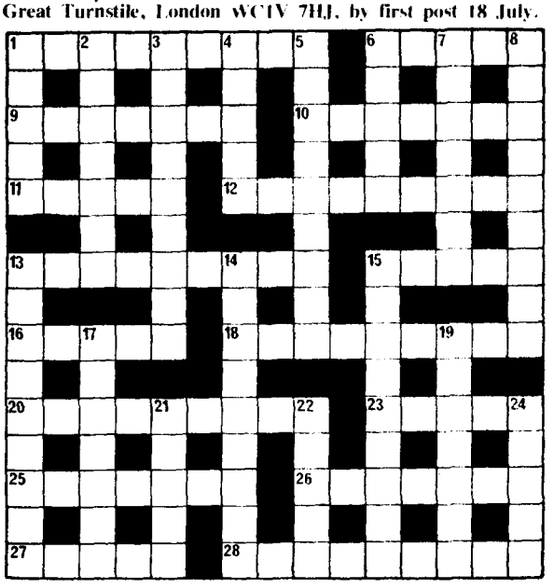


Solution to Problem 88

No! The most interesting line is 1. P-B7, B-B4! (in order to meet R-K5 with B-Q3) 2. R-B7, B-Q5! (If 3. R-B4, B-K4;) 3. R-R7, B-B7! 4. R-N7, B-K6! (Note that, say 4. B-Q5, loses to 5. R-N4! B-K4; 6. K-N6! BxPch; 7. K-B6) 5. R-K7, B-B4! 6. R-Q7! B-N8! (Only move e.g. B-B7? 7. R-R7! Zugzwang) 7. R-Q1, B-N3! (Not B-R7, K-N6 wins) 8. KxB stalemate.

Weekend Crossword 1268

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1268, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 18 July.



ACROSS

1. It produces a distinguished paper to study after a drink (9).
6. Something edible which is cold and firm (5).
9. Vindicated although old without being venerable (7).
10. The bulb holds the first page in view (7).
11. Queen's place provided for girl with a degree (5).
12. Give a ring and then elope in disguise (9).
13. End of toes made up and decorated (9).
15. Belief which is part of sacred occasion (5).
16. State which is nearly all sea (5).
18. They show jealousy, but give positive reaction to novelist (5, 4).
20. Purifies by putting taxes on desire (9).
23. Where a fool is before time (5).
25. Famous courtesan gives a dance in the Orient (7).
26. Lead astray when crazy about Man, for example (7).
27. Where there would be wickedness if the party were abandoned (5).
28. Mix up and send us things at the seaside (9).

DOWN

1. Puts on for a European audience? (5).
2. Greek who had arguments about the universal (7).
3. Fix up graduate with part in rambling discourse (9).
4. Call to account at holding a rebellion (5).
5. 'With too much —— for the sceptic side' (Pope) (9).
6. Short or curly (5).
7. Though fat I am prepared to be photographed on the commercial (7).
8. It is rash to act without rage over America (9).
13. Fellow novelist includes a story-teller for friends (9).
14. Birds give one nasty shocks after dark (9).
15. Like a seat possibly, so supported candidate (9).
17. Weak but there is a little taste in the centre (7).
19. The last you rear (7).
21. Vegetable product for a second in control (5).
22. Saint would become evil if there were no doctor (5).
24. King produces some writing about a woman (5).

SUBSQUARE

Solution to Salamanca 7

G	N	O	T	O	B	I	O	T	E	D	I	A		
G	A	S	O	L	I	N	E	V	R	I	L			
S	B	I	R	R	O	F	R	A	M	A	L			
Q	K	E	Q	S	T	A	B	L	I	S	H			
U	P	R	U	N	A	N	Y	S	N	T	I	A		
A	L	M	A	N	A	C	S	H	E	O	L			
B	E	N	T	Y	R	Y	E	R	O	L	L			
A	T	U	E	A	I	R	C	A	M	E	O			
S	H	R	E	D	P	I	E	P	A	D	W			
H	O	H	U	M	P	I	V	I	N	O	U	S		
E	R	A	S	A	L	E	B	E	R	R	Y			
R	A	G	E	N	E	T	H	L	I	A	C			

Prizewinners to Salamanca 7
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Bob Hitchcock (High Wycombe)
A. J. Bisset (Stonehaven)

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EDUC. MALE, 40, 6ft, slim, wide artistic ints, sks fdship, f. 30-50. Box 1952.

RESEARCHER (f)/member of Film A Assn/Extra-Mural lecturer/member of modelling agency/medalist dancer/Bisley competitor/'sailor'/also interested in local politics, art, writing, music, among other things, is divorced, in early 40s, with one child, wishes to meet man view to friendship, poss. marriage. Box 1956.

MALE STUDENT, 21, down for long vac. sks female companion for Proms. Box 2009.

I'M 29, f., & have smashing career lecturing. Now I'd like to marry but all nicest men I meet are wed. If you are highly intelligent, personable, under 40, unattached & like idea of domestic bliss. Box 1989.

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NEW STATESMAN

Vol. 96 No. 2468

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Theatres

ALDWYCH THEATRE (Royal Shakespeare Company) 836 6404 Info 836 5332. Shakespeare's 'Coriolanus' in repertoire with Strindberg's 'The Dance of Death' (see daily press for dates and times). RSC also at The Warehouse in David Rudkin's 'The Sons of Light', Peter Flannery's 'Savage Amusement' and late night Frid. in Jack Klaff's 'Letters Alone' and at the Piccadilly Theatre in Peter Nichols' 'Privates on Parade'.

CHICHESTER. 0243 81312. Last 2 perfs 7 & 8 July at 7.00 'A Woman of No Importance'. 8 July at 2.00, 13 July at 7.00 'The Inconstant Couple'. Prev. 10 July. 11, 12, 14 & 15 July at 7.00. 13 July at 2.00 'The Aspern Papers'.

NATIONAL THEATRE 928 2252 'The Country Wife', 'Brand', 'Macbeth', 'Plenty', 'Bedroom Farce', 'Plunder', 'American Buffalo'. See daily press for dates and times or ring recorded information 928 2256.

SUGAWN THEATRE. Duke of Wellington, Balls Pond Road, N1. Box Office: 254 1458 or 249 3729. Catalan Productions presents: 'This is my Body' and 'Forward with the Champion' — new plays by Harry Tierney. 10-26 July, Mon-Thurs. 8 p.m. Admission £1.00, OAPs/Students 60p.

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VENERABLE CHIME RINPOCHE will give talks on Tibetan Buddhism and Meditation on Tuesdays 6.30 p.m. commencing 4 July at Tibet Society, Room 7, National Liberal Club, 1 Whitehall Place, SW1.

LABOUR FRIENDS OF ISRAEL invite you to hear Shimon Peres MK, leader of the Israeli Labour Party, (Rt Hon Lord Glenamara CH — chair). Wednesday 12 July at 7.30 p.m., Committee Room 10, House of Commons.

YOUNG FABIAN GROUP. John Mahoney Union of Post Office Workers on 'The Social and Political Responsibility of the Trade Unionist'. Tues. 11 July 8 p.m. at 11 Dartmouth St, London SW1. All welcome.

THEOSOPHY. Informal Forum on Basic Theosophy. Sun. 9 July 8 p.m. All welcome. S.a.e. free pamphlet, talks programme, booklist. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2.

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